

MY OLD COUSIN.

A NOVEL.

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MY OLD COUSIN;

OR,

A PEEP INTO COCHIN-CHINA.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*ROMANTIC FACTS, OR WHICH IS HIS WIFE? VERONICA, OR
THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER, &c.*

T^hε μέν γε περὶ εὐθείαν.

ARATUS OF CILICIA

We are of this man's family.

'Thou art not of the fashion of these times.'

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. III.

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MY OLD COUSI

CHAPTER I.

Sed fugite, O miseri ! fugite, atq; ab litore funem
Rumpite !

— — — — —
Vix ea fatus erat, summo cum monte videin
Ipsum inter pecudes vasta se mole moventem,
Pastorem Polyphemum, et litora nota petentem.

VIRGIL.

Fly, oh wretches ! fly this barbarous shore !
Scarcely were these words spoken, when they beheld
the monstrous Cyclop striding down to the well-
known coast.

Paraphrase.

EAGERLY did the anxious trio on
the rocks look forward, and strain their
eyesight to catch a glimpse of Alvarez
and Miguel returning.

Delightedly they perceived what at first appeared not more than two specks of black moving towards them; in a few minutes it was discernible they had the human shape—next it became plain they sustained a burden—finally, and to stifle every doubt, the captives spake, and, nearly exhausted with their labour, presented the required supply of fresh water.

An hour's rest was all that could possibly be allowed, as shortly after sunrise, according to Alvarez's opinion, the Arabs would be preparing for their descent to the coast.

It was not a very easy thing to trace their way over the rocks with their present uncertain glimmering of light; but necessity was laid upon them, and to what extraordinary exertions does it not prompt!

By

By the time when the terrific Africans were expected to awake from their slumbers, the shipwrecked mariners were hauling down their boat to the sea, stowing their provisions in the likeliest way to preserve them, and preparing for embarkation ; and fortunate it was they had used this activity and expedition, for within half-an-hour after they had pushed out into the wide ocean, they beheld the hideous wretches, from whose power they had so narrowly escaped, rushing down to the beach, with a ferocity of countenance and demeanour which brought so forcibly to Rodney's recollection a favourite school story of the Cyclops enraged by the loss of their prey, that he almost expected to see them wading with gigantic steps into the water : luckily the Africans fell short

in stature of those whom our hero thus in his mind entitled their predecessors in barbarism.

Nothing can display with greater strength of colouring the dread which the adventurers we have just sent to sea entertained of becoming the property of the merciless Arabs, than the general hilarity which prevailed when they found themselves several leagues from shore, though their vessel was but an open boat, and they had neither sail nor compass. So it is among the vicissitudes of human life! escape from an impending danger produces a momentary forgetfulness of the host of evils with which, even "in the best estate," we are environed.

Until the light of day faded from the sky, and they found themselves encompassed

passed with darkness not relieved by even one twinkling star, our voyagers appeared not fully aware of their forlorn and perilous condition; then the idea forced itself imperiously on every mind, and they recollect ed how ill their frail bark would be able to contend against a sudden gale of wind, or live in a rough sea—how easily under so gloomy a sky they might be run down by some passing vessel!

Alvarez, who was a priest of the Carthusian order, and had been cast away near the fatal cape of Bogadore, whilst returning from a sacred mission at Macao, felt this a seasonable opportunity for exercising his ministerial duty of exhorting to fortitude and resignation; and so successfully did he enforce his doctrine, that he had soon the soothing

satisfaction of hearing every voice on board joining in his submissive exclamation—"Not *our* will but *thine* be done, oh Father! We are thy servants—do with us what thou wilt."

Protected by Him on whom they thus acknowledged their dependence, the dismal night was passed by them in safety, and they gratefully feasted their eyes with that most glorious of spectacles—the sun rising from the ocean, unimpeded in his luminous course by a single cloud.

Distant sails, too, though merely to be traced on the verge of the horizon, caused every heart to throb with rapturous expectation. One of them rapidly increased upon the sight—they soon perceived from her rigging that she was a brig.

Every

Every exertion of the oar was made use of, in order to come within her observation; they were noticed—they were hailed through a speaking-trumpet—hailed in Portuguese.

Blessed sounds! to what happy changes were they the almost immediate prelude!

In less than half-an-hour the perils and dangers of an open boat were exchanged for the comforts and comparative security of a large merchantman—the mournful apprehension that home and its gentle associations must be seen no more, for a cordial reception, and the warm embraces of friends and countrymen.

The baleful star seemed set, or at least to have expended its violence. Winds favoured, the heavens smiled,

and several days within the time expected, the vessel cast anchor near Belém.

Rodney, by no means the least delighted of the party with whom his fortune had joined him in such harrowing trials, without delay waited on the English *charge d'affaires* at Lisbon; his narrative was told with too much *naïveté* to be discredited, and was too singular and affecting not to rivet attention.

So interested indeed became the amiable hearer, that he humanely received our hero as an inmate in his family during the few days which must elapse previous to the sailing of an English packet, and then generously sent him on board as a cabin passenger.

The voyage to Britannia's lovely shores

shores was prosperous and rapid, and in about a fortnight the vessel which contained our friend, Rodney St. Paul, was safely moored in the noble and spacious dock at Kingston-upon-Hull.

CHAPTER II.

He hails his native shore, and presses on,
Fancying that rugged toil and peril o'er,
He shall repose him on the myrtle bed
Of calm domestic peace. How vain the hopes !
How short the prospect of believing man !

THOMSON.

A PILGRIM who, having steered in safety through the dangers of a journey to the Holy Land, beholds the sacred towers of Palestine's great city, could not feel more genuine rapture than did Rodney on once more setting foot upon his native island.

The busy commercial town of King-
ston-

ston-upon-Hull had no attractions for him, and there he only continued until the departure of a Scarborough coach, which would carry him nearly to the gates of Napperton Abbey.

The journey, though short of seventeen miles, appeared to occupy an unreasonable space of time; and never during his life did Rodney feel so much disposed to quarrel with the deep-cut roads of our humid climate, pretty generally to be found at the close of the year.

The sun set before four o'clock, and it was past that time considerably when the well-remembered walnut avenue at Napperton was recognized, gladly recognized: through its leafless boughs the outline of the ancient Abbey was faintly distinguishable, but not a light,

either stationary or moving from casement to casement, met his inquiring eye.

It was the hour when, in former happy days, tea used to be served in Mrs. Mary St. Paul's back-parlour; this might account for the darkness of the hall which fronted the road, but could it for the absence of an hospitable blaze from the large windows of the kitchen? Oh no! the house must be unoccupied—the hearts of his good old cousins must have ceased to beat.

“ And can I reasonably expect it to be otherwise,” thought Rodney, “ when I call to mind their advanced age and increasing infirmities at the time I quitted them?—it must—it must be so!” and a sigh to their revered memory burst from his troubled heart.

“ But

“ But still,” continued he, mentally, “ even these mournful events would not necessarily render the Abbey a deserted pile—some of *my friends* would surely reside there. Oh, I tremble even to conjecture the sad changes which may have taken place during my seven years’ absence.”

There was not time for the present pursuance of these melancholy cogitations—the coach stopped.

With merely nodded adieus to his fellow-travellers, and the usual douceur to the coachman, Rodney leaped down, and hurried to the great gate of the Abbey grounds—it was fastened by an immense padlock ; he skipped over the adjoining stile, and with rapid steps and a quick-beating pulse, pursued the footpath

footpath leading to the ancient mansion.

It was light enough (for the moon had by this time risen) to shew him that the walk which had formerly been kept remarkably trim and well gravelled, was

“With nettles skirted and with moss o’ergrown,”*

and that the bordering hedges had lost all traces of the ingenious old gardener’s shears.

He soon reached the court into which the grand hall and principal entrance of the Abbey opened; the walls were covered with tufts of grass, the gate locked, and every window of the house closely shuttered. He looked up to the chimneys,

* Blair.

chimneys, but not one circling wreath of smoke ascended—desolation seemed to have taken undisturbed possession.

“ You are then gone indeed, my kind and venerated cousins!” sighed poor Rodney; “ from your dear friendly voices, voices whose tones still appear to vibrate on my sense, no welcome home awaits me.”

An involuntary groan of regret burst from his bosom, and he continued for many minutes leaning over the decayed courtyard wall in silent contemplation.

Marton was only distant two short miles—thither he determined on going immediately.—“ There—there,” argued he, “ something animated, something affectionate, will surely be found to cheer my drooping spirits, and congratulate me on escaping from exile.”

He must unavoidably go past Napperton Church in pursuing the foot-road to his father's; beneath its hallowed roof, in a projecting side aisle of the chancel, reposed the ashes of his ancestors.

This sepulchral chapel (formerly a chauntry for masses for the souls of the deceased St. Pauls) was lighted by a large Gothic window, on which, at the moment he approached, the moon beamed her full and unclouded splendour. He could not resist an impulse to take a near survey of this place of kindred dust. He looked through the diagonal squares of glass—a lofty mural monument of statuary marble met his eye, and he could distinctly read upon it—

BELOW REPOSE,
IN HOPES OF A JOYFUL RESURRECTION,
THE MORTAL REMAINS
OF
CHRISTOPHER ST. PAUL, Esq.
OF NAPPERTON ABBEY;
THE LINEAL DESCENDANT OF A
FAMILY FROM
THE TOWN OF ST. PAUL,
IN NORMANDY,
WHICH ENTERED ENGLAND WITH
WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR:
HE LIVED
TO THE GREAT AGE OF
ONE HUNDRED AND THREE YEARS,
AND DIED,
IN THE FAITH AND FEAR OF GOD,
JULY 2, 1798.

A little

A little to the right of this inscription appeared a memorial of his departed cousin, Mrs. Mary; and there was yet another "*memento mori*," covering a part of the wall which he remembered when he left the Abbey to have been unoccupied, but it was too much in shade to admit of one letter being deciphered; whom it commemorated he could not therefore discover.

Time for the painful conjectures to which the latter circumstance naturally led the way was not at present allowed, for his melancholy musings were at this moment interrupted by the clapping of the churchyard-gate, and on turning he beheld a man with a pipe in his mouth, drawing near, who from his gait appeared supported by a wooden leg.

Rodney discovered, even from afar, his

his old friend and tutor, lieutenant Hatchway, but his heart was too full with what he had recently seen and read to utter even a syllable of recognition.

The honest tar, on the other hand, had not the remotest notion that in the stranger he was looking upon his pet pupil, Rodney St. Paul, which is not at all surprising, when we consider that at the time our hero quitted England he was only a boy of twelve years old, and now presented himself in the form of a well-grown young man of more than nineteen: he wore, however, the dress of a sailor, and that was quite sufficient to ensure him a cordial greeting from the lieutenant, whose bosom yearned with truly professional ardour towards every

every thing connected with his darling element.

“ Well, my hearty,” cried he, “ and what wind blows you here so many hours *p. m.* in the month of December? If you be bearing up for night moorings at the old Abbey, let me tell you, you are on the wrong tack—that harbour’s blocked and barred completely, for the kind-hearted old one, who opened his ports so freely to any flag in want of shelter, has been towed off, God knows, and I know to my sorrow, by the surly commodore Death. And there,” continued he, pointing to the church, and at the same time dash-
ing a tear from his weather-beaten cheek, “ there he lies at anchor, and, as the old mariner’s epitaph at Scarborough says, must lie

‘ Till summoned he
At length shall be,
His admiral, Christ, to meet.’

“ And is it possible you do not know me, Hatchway, dear Hatchway ?” interrogated Rodney.

“ Not I, by Neptune !” answered the lieutenant, staring on him earnestly ; “ you are too young to have been one of my messmates—and yet,” continued he, “ there is sure enough something in the cut of that jib which seems familiar to me.”

“ Is there nothing in it, lieutenant,” inquired young St. Paul, “ which calls to your mind the little Rodney of former days ?”

“ Rodney ?—Rodney St. Paul ?” returned Hatchway : “ no, no, no, it can’t be—it can’t be ! Come, no tricks upon travellers,

travellers, youngster—But yet—yet—just let me take another observation—there is, to be sure and certain, something of the family about you—but

“ No more *buts*, dear Hatchway,” interrupted our hero; “ I am *indeed* your old acquaintance, Rodney St. Paul.”

The information operated upon the lieutenant as music is said to do on persons bit by the tarantula spider, for he cast away his pipe in a moment, hopped briskly forward, seized his quondam pupil by the fist, which he almost shook off, and then fell to leaping and huzzing with the antics of a madman.—“ And you are, in sober honest truth, *our* Rodney?” vociferated he. “ Yes, yes, you are—you are—you must be—you

you shall be!" and once more he pursued his strange capering.

" Oh, I'm so overjoyed, so over-powered, that I neither know what I do, nor *where I am*," softening his voice as he spoke the last words, and casting a most melancholy look at the old church. " But I shall not disturb the dear souls; they are beyond the reach of my trumpet.—But come, come, my boy, let us steer away from this sad spot—this is no berth for Jack Hatchway to moisten his pipe with his salt tears in at present; no, no, please the painter, we'll have a figure of Joy at the head, finished off to the life, to-night—ay, and we'll empty her can too: and ha'n't we good reason?" pursued the tar, almost dragging Rodney away—" ha'n't we got a first-rate returned safe from her cruise to

to the desolate islands?—ha'n't we got a St. Paul? Yes, yes; I hope a real St. Paul for life, at this here Abbey; for Fanny can't be such a jilt as the knowing ones would make her—she'll never allow anchorage here to any but her own natural consort, when once she finds he's weathered his storm. We shall see the wood blaze in the old chimnies at the Abbey yet, and hear the old wives 'at the good time*', singing for luck to the 'squire and madam St. Paul, and 'all the pretty children that round the table go.'

Rodney, whose agitation these sentences (though decisive of the speaker's affection) were not much calculated to mitigate, suffered himself, to humour the worthy lieutenant's phraseology, to
be

* Christmas.

be towed along, unresistingly and silently, if we except a few interrogations as to the changes in his beloved family, which had caused such complete desolation in the Abbey and its environs.

The only answers elicited by them were—"Oh, the land shark! Oh, the son of old Strombolo!"

After these and similar exclamations had been uttered, till the speaker was quite tired with the repetition, they were succeeded by—"I can tell you nothing, Rodney, just now, for the life and soul of me! Sympson shall give you the whole tot of it in his own way."

This led to Rodney's expression of unfeigned delight, that the well-recollected "Six-and-eightpence" still was living.

“Living!” repeated lieutenant Hatchway, “yes, and happy; and will be happier than he ever dreamt of when he sees you again; ay, and so will Mrs. Hatchway—there’s another old crony for you to salute. But I won’t say another word till I’ve steered you safe into our snug creek of a harbour—not a syllable, but just an observation which I would make, if even death were capsizing me, that I wish all your lawyers were like old Sympson, for then we should have nothing dealt out to us but good old-fashioned English justice, which never condemns a prize unlawfully.

“Right would overcome might then—But it’s all the other way on, God knows, in our days.

“Oh, they’re a strange set, Master Rodney;

Rodney; and I love 'em just as well, d'ye see, as a cat does to have her feet wet; and that, as the Irishman would tell you, is not 'at all at all.' But you'll believe all this, and more, when you hear Sympson's story."

They now came to a lane, winding along the ruinous walls of the Abbey garden, which was so deeply spread with mud and stiff clay, that it required not a little management to avoid being laid fast by the heels. Here it was impossible to converse much, for the piloting lieutenant, who proceeded, could attend to nothing but his duty; and would have considered himself much out of it, if he had uttered any thing beyond admonitory counsels, such as—"Mind your tacks!—Bear to the larboard!—Rocks to the starboard!—Don't run a-

board your pilot, captain!—Make sail there, the squall's a-coming!"

The angle of the perishing wall being passed, a building presented itself, which in Rodney's early days was uninhabited, and had often been pointed out to him as the hospital where the humane nuns of Napperton had, for many a year, practised their "leeches' skill," and dispensed their viands to sick and indigent travellers.

Hatchway now changed the "note of his piping," and "sung out" most lustily—"House, a-hoy! A-board the *Content*, a-hoy! Hang out your lights, there—here's a first-rate just weathering the pier!"

The door of the solitary habitation half-opened; light was altogether useless, for a clearer moonlight sky could not

not well be seen. A large dog bounced out, and leaped up to fawn upon his master, casting at the same time a suspicious glance at the stranger, accompanying it by a sort of stifled bark.

“Cerberus!” cried Rodney, for in the animal he discovered another old acquaintance.

Cerberus* obeyed the *summons*: the voice he heard, the figure he beheld, were new; but he had sense enough to call in his ablest counsellor, viz. his smell, before he determined the inviter to be friend or foe: the wagging of the sagacious creature’s tail proved the evidence thus sought favourable, if not decisive; but the moment he heard him-

* Behold the faithful dog his master knew.

self addressed—“ Cerby! Cerby, my poor fellow!” all doubt vanished, and he flew up to receive the caresses of his quondam playmate and companion with an air of complete acknowledgment.

As they approached the door, the girl who had unlatched it retired inwards, and Rodney heard himself thus announced by her, in a shrill voice, and broad Yorkshire dialect—“ Maister’s gotten a saylor chap wiv him, but I knawn’t wha ’tis, for I nivver seed him afore. Sarby howivver kens him, an’ seems despert fond on him.”

If this speech received an answer, it was entirely drowned to Rodney in the louder tones of Hatchway, who continued bawling—“ Come along, boy!—come along! Don’t stand rubbing and scrubbing

scrubbing there, like a poor devil of a cabinboy at the door of some finical freshwater captain's stateroom; the lass will swab your boots by morning's tide, and I've a pair of true *Rooshas** in the locker for you to-night, which ha'n't lost their right Baltic smell."

Rodney was ostensibly engaged in transferring the mud from his stiffly plastered feet to a band of twisted straw in the passage, but in reality far more intent upon the scene which a wide-open door presented in full view. A cheerful fire of "wood piled high," and a burning lamp, rendered every object clearly discernible.

On one side of the chimney, in a high-backed chair of stuffed leather, sat Symp-

* Russia leather slippers.

son, altered considerably by the ravages of time, and embrowned, as of old, with Scotch snuff; but, from the intelligent character of his eye, still retaining the faculties of mind in full perfection. Opposite to him was an aged female, whose operations of the wheel had been obviously suspended by the vociferations of the lieutenant: she had turned an inquisitory look towards the entrance, and Rodney delightedly beheld the face of Mary Johnson, his cousin's old house-keeper. Two or three cats lay purring round the hearth, in the centre of which stood a Dutch oven, well stocked with potatoes, roasting for the family supper.

The harmony of this calm domestic picture was completely broken when Hatchway stumped forward, chaunting most

most sonorously the verse from an old Scots ballad, which begins—

“Rise up and mak’ a clean fireside,
Hang on the muckle pot.”

“Ay, and ye will too, Mary, cheerfully, right cheerfully,” cried the lieutenant, “when you find what a noble prize I’ve captured here. Why, Sympson—why, dame—what, ye’re only fair-weather friends then, after all comes to all? And so you’ve never a word then to welcome a poor fellow home with? Well, well, I’ll not be after snivelling, because you’re so dumbfounded, for it only proves that other folks can be as blind buzzards as old Jack Hatchway. So you don’t know him then, hah? Ay, ay, look and stare at him as ye like.”

“We do!—we do know him!” echoed from both voices.

It is however but justice to honest Cerberus to acknowledge that he was an accessory to their discovery; for taking advantage of a temporary opening of the door, he had rushed in, and, during Hatchway’s harangue, had reared up his fore paws against our hero.

“We do know him,” repeated Sympson and Mrs. Hatchway—“he is *our own Rodney!*”

Six-and-eightpence attempted to rise at the moment of his exclamation; Mary *did* so, and found herself a thousand-fold rewarded by the grateful kiss which our young sailor impressed upon her lips.

To congratulations succeeded inquiries and explanations so interesting, that although

although they continued until the dawn of day, not a lowering eyelid in the party evinced any thing like an inclination for sleep.

CHAPTER III.

He can with ease assume all outward forms,
Seem the most honest, plain, sincere, good man,
And keep his own designs lock'd close within ;
While with the lynx's beam he penetrates
The deep reserve of ev'ry other breast.

JEPUSON.

A REPETITION of Rodney's adventures would be truly superfluous ; I must, however, to keep up the thread of my story, in as few words as possible relate the occurrences which had taken place in the St. Paul family during the last seven years.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mary's death was followed, in little more than a year, by that of her brother. *His* funeral was conducted with due attention to the ancient customs of the family; and after it the company were invited to the great hall of the Abbey, in order to hear the will of the deceased.

To the general astonishment of the numerous party, the testament bequeathed "all and every" of the late Mr. St. Paul's "estate and effects (with the exception of five thousand pounds to Mr. William, and a few charitable donations) to Frances Sharkem, spinster," appointing, at the same time, her father guardian and sole executor, and declaring, that "in case she, the said Frances Sharkem, should marry without the consent of her said father, that then

then the estate and effects therein devised and bequeathed should become the sole property of the said John Sharkem, esquire, his heirs and assigns for ever."

Appeal against this extraordinary disposition of property there was none, for the will appeared regularly executed—attested by three highly respectable witnesses; and *Mr. William St. Paul*, though certainly heir-at-law to the deceased, could not claim any part of the estate under deed of settlement or entail.

The crafty Sharkem breathed forth his ever-ready chain of complimentary adjectives at every clause of the important document, and when the recital of it concluded, added—“ This is all due, and owing, and to be attributed to, and accounted for by, the love and affection and attachment evinced, shewn, avowed, and

and acknowledged by the dear, good, kind-hearted Rodney St. Paul, for and towards my sweet, pretty, interesting little Fanny. Don't, don't be cast down, worthy, excellent Mister William—rather, Mister Saint Paul, for you are now rightly, clearly, and to all intents and purposes, the top, head, chief, or apex of your ancient house, lineage, and descent. Excuse me, I pray, beg, and beseech, and attribute my want of respect and attention, in my unthinking, careless, not-to-be-defended address, to the violence, severity, and acuteness of my grief, sorrow, and tribulation for our late never-to-be-repaired or made-up loss. Don't, don't be cast down, dear, good Mr. Saint Paul; I shall be an active, vigilant, and faithful guardian for her, who although, as in blood proceeding

ceeding, *my* real and natural daughter, *you* have always regarded with the feelings of a father. Perhaps I shall only be managing, and I hope, pray, and beseech it may prove the case, for your worthy excellent family. Rodney may, and most likely will, return; and oh, what delight and joy will that occasion to poor dear Fanny!"

By the way, he had, at the very moment of these expressions and assertions, private reasons for concluding that all hopes of our hero's reappearance in England were completely at an end, for he understood it to be the general opinion of those who returned with lord M——'s embassy, that he must have accidentally perished in the vicinity of Turon Bay.

Mr. William St. Paul, who was not
to

to be gulled by these hypocritical representations, merely replied to them by observing, that his worthy old cousin had certainly a right to dispose of his estate and property as he thought fit—“ And I *suppose* he exercised it,” added he: “ but, after all, it is assuredly a strange unaccountable will; he must have known the almost-certainty of our poor Rodney’s death. But I submit; though, with *my* family, Mr. Sharkem, the loss of an inheritance like Napper-ton—an inheritance to which, by nearness of relationship, we had great reason to look forward, is certainly a most serious disappointment. But I repeat, I submit; for property, upon being considered in its true light, is not of that importance which the general struggle for it seems to imply. A few short

years,

years, Mr. Sharkem, as far as you and I are individually concerned, and the possession of Napperton, nay, of all the treasures of the East, will avail us nothing! Can we secure such fugitive things as riches, even with the strongest precautions, to those we now fondly contemplate as our heirs? Oh no! they, like ourselves, may be swept away from the face of the earth, and be no more seen. ‘God,’ to employ a proverbial expression, ‘maketh heirs;’ and I cannot suppress an observation, that those who succeed in an irregular way seldom enjoy a *very* protracted inheritance.”

Mr. St. Paul did not wait for a reply, but with a mournful farewell look at each surrounding object, quitted the venerable seat of his ancestors for ever.

Sharkem

Sharkem was certainly a good deal affected by the solemn address just recited, for in it were some home strokes, which told most severely; it did not, however, disqualify him from entering, in due form, upon the immediate discharge of his executorial duties; for Mr. St. Paul had scarcely quitted the house, before he summoned the ancient domestics of the family into the great hall, and demanded possession of the keys of their different departments, and at the same time informed them, that—" All wage, or wages, or other sum or sums of money, which might be due and owing to them, or any of them, from their late dear, excellent, worthy master, should be paid and discharged with all convenient speed; and that from, and immediately after, such payment and discharge

charge before-mentioned, their several and respective services would cease, determine, and be no longer required, previous contract or agreement with the defunct Christopher St. Paul, esquire, notwithstanding."

When the different keys of office were deposited on the hall table, Mr. Sharkem's confidential clerk (Wilson), who had recited the will, ticketed each with a label of parchment, and afterwards fixed the whole of them upon a steel ring.

The weeping household were immediately dismissed, but not before they had been obliged to listen to another address from the longwinded solicitor, setting forth and shewing, to make use of some of his favourite terms, that as a faithful and conscientious guardian, it behoved

behoved him to be thus particular, in order that regular and exact inventories might be forthwith made, or drawn out, of all the goods and chattels, which, by the last will and testament of the deceased squire, now vested in his daughter, Frances Sharkem, and of which he must one day, when thereunto lawfully called, be required to surrender a just and true account.

Few guardians, at the commencement of their office, ever exhibited stronger testimony of interest in the affairs of those committed to their care than Sharkem, for no less than a whole week of his *precious* time did he unrepiningly devote to the inspection of old Mr. St. Paul's papers, or consume in making out lists of plate, linen, books, china, and other valuables. So much indeed

deed did he descend to minutiae, that, to borrow an expression of Mrs. Hatchway's, it was reported and believed, he overlooked not a dishcloth in his accurate survey.

The most important of this moveable property, which thus devolved on Fanny Sharkem, for the benefit of *safe custody* was speedily removed to the house of her father, and the Abbey immediately after shut up. The latter circumstance, like every thing else left entirely to conjecture, was differently accounted for; the superstitious part of the neighbourhood, as may be guessed, ascribed it to the activity of *certain nocturnal disturbers*, who never yield possession of an ancient country mansion to any but the rightful heir, without evincing violent opposition. Others more rationally thought

thought it merely proved that Sharkem, like *les parvenus ou nouveaux riches* in general, designed to blot out the remembrance of those whom he succeeded, as far as that could be accomplished by levelling their residence with the ground.

“Never,” observed Sympson, who was the principal narrator of these distressing particulars to Rodney, “must I forget the day when we took our last farewell of the dear Abbey. I say *we*, because you must know, Master Rodney, that for the last two years of our excellent friend’s life, I had been entirely detained there; for even after his eyesight would not allow him to distinguish the moves of the backgammon-board, no one could read to him so satisfactorily as myself—no one could mix

his

his punch or fill his pipe like me; poor Kester Hilton, you must understand, was dead."

" It was indeed a sorrowful day," interrupted Mrs. Hatchway, the tears flowing down her furrowed cheeks at the remembrance; " it was more trying, I do think, than all the funerals."

" Thank Heaven, however," resumed the agitated Sympson, " there was not a dependent attached to our good old friend's establishment who had not saved something to begin the world with. Luckily for Mrs. Johnson, myself, and Hatchway, the considerate old 'squire had, several years before we lost him, provided for the necessities of our old age, by inserting our names in a three-life lease of about ninety acres of land, adjoining the cottage where we now are.

are.—This kind act," continued he, turning to the lieutenant, " I think, Hatchway, first suggested to you the idea of making Mary ' bone of your bone?'

" Why, it certainly embarked us in one bottom, as the saying is," said the old sailor; " but I'd been trying to clap on the grappling hooks of matrimony before that breeze set in—Hadn't I, Polly?"

It was not in the power of Hatchway's joke to raise a smile on the countenance of poor Rodney, for he was not only depressed by the detail which preceded it, but persuaded he could read something in the countenance of Sympson which augured a reserve of distressing information: and, alas! he was not mistaken, for he had yet to hear of the death of his worthy and

beloved father—an event which occurred within six months after that of his venerable cousin, the old squire, and was, according to received opinion, accelerated by his recent disappointment; for notwithstanding the philosophy which appeared on the face of his address to Sharkeim after the funeral, he felt the loss of Napperton very severely, and never afterwards^{*} enjoyed either health or spirits: to render the stroke still more heavy, it came upon him at a time when an acquisition of fortune would have been particularly acceptable, for owing to the failure of considerable mercantile speculations in which two of his sons were engaged, he was just then embarrassed by some extensive pecuniary difficulties.

“ And my truly excellent mother,”
asked

asked Rodney, half suffocated with grief, “ how did she support all this weight of woe? Alas! I tremble for your answer —Did she survive?”

“ She did,” replied Sympson; “ and, thanks to that kind Power who is ‘ a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow,’ is blest with tolerable health, and surrounded by every comfort which can arise from a moderate competency. She resides at Danesdale, in which, perhaps you will recollect, that by marriage-settlement she has a life-interest. Matt is the manager of her little farm; your two younger sisters divide the household cares; your eldest is married to the worthy curate of Napperton, to whom Sharpen, by the way, ought to have given the living, which has lately become vacant.

Charles and George have a commercial concern at Liverpool. William, as you will imagine, lives on the entailed estate at Marton; he is married, and has two children."

"That good Mrs. St. Paul does not forget the friends of her still dear Rodney," interrupted Mrs. Hatchway, "is plain from her occasional calls here, and the many kind presents with which she is perpetually favouring us; the sausages which you partook of at supper were the produce of her farm."

There was yet another being after whom Rodney longed most earnestly and ardently to inquire.

Reader, you know, you feel, the individual here meant—you cry spontaneously—"It was Fanny—the tenderly-loved Fanny;" and you are right: he had

had been informed, as you are aware, of her acquisition of fortune, but he wished likewise to find out how she had acquitted herself in consequence of it—whether, in plain English, she seemed to have forgotten that such a creature as Rodney St. Paul had ever existed. He did not go quite so far in his inquiries, but he said sufficient to prove, beyond a doubt, that the object of his early love still occupied a very eminent situation in his affections.

“ Dear sweet child ! she had no hand in her father’s black doings,” answered Mrs. Hatchway; “ I do believe she would have been much better pleased if a St. Paul had inherited than herself. She never passes without calling, and many’s the kind office she has done to us, and, indeed, to every one attached

to the old squire. "My good man," added she, "is one of her top-favourites, for she never sees him without saying—'Dear Hatchway!' or 'How d'ye do?' or 'Well, I fear, now that you have lost your admiral Rodney, you'll be put on the shelf, lieutenant.' When she says '*admiral Rodney*,' for she means you, sir, she never speaks without the tears trickling down her pretty cheeks: and then she sighs so heavily!—But—but
—"

"Why can't you clap your trumpet to your mouth at once, Mary," cried the lieutenant, "and sing out, which must be done sooner or later, that the Fanny, first-rate, is put into commission, and daily expected to receive a commanding-officer on board?"

The statement to which this exclamation

mation led set forth, that five months previous to Rodney's return home, old Sharkem had treated Fanny and her mamma with a jaunt to the Dragon at Harrowgate, where they fell in with a noble Scotch lord, whose scanty rent-roll gave him as just a right to king John's epithet of Lackland, *alias, Sans Terre*, as his serpentine figure to that of Æsop; but he had rank, let my reader recollect, and as "charity" is said "to hide the multitude of sins," so, according to the old solicitor's notions, did rank conceal a multitude of personal and mental imperfections. To see his darling Fanny, doubly his darling since she had become the indisputable heiress of Napperton Abbey, a countess, was the summit of his ambition—to hear himself called grandpapa by right honourable

nourable masters and right honourable lady Fannies and lady Maries—Oh! the bare anticipation was delightful! Could these things be brought to pass, he soothed himself with the reflection that he could then depart in peace—to bring them about, he strained every nerve.

From the moment the tiny earl of Kilrennie looked at his fair daughter, he marked him for his future son-in-law, and *courted* him most assiduously, unremittingly.

Sharkem had venison, fruit, and game, sent down to Harrowgate from half the parks, gardens, and manors, in Yorkshire, of which he took especial care that his lordship should abundantly partake.

Sharkem had carriages, horses, servants, all ready for the noble earl's accommodation;

commodation; and then he could flatter so sweetly, that even his long-spun speeches could be heard without occasioning the smallest *tedium*.

Mrs. Sharkem, too, who was desperately smitten with the desire of being mother to a peeress, had her artillery of *bon-bons*, which fell rather thickly on every side of “my lord,” in the form of complimentary speeches and attentions of all sorts and sizes.

“ Lard Kil-rai-ney is soo eesy, soo genteel, soo jane-tle-manely,” to adopt her pretty method of drawling out words through her nose: “ how chawming-ly he dahn-ees! so troo-ly Seawtch! soo aner-jatic!—Well, I do admire the reel so—there’s salim-thing soo mane-ly in it, so graze-ful; and Mister Share-cum

tells me he plays equally well at beel-li-ards, and bake-gaymon, and chayse—Oh, he's sare-tin-ly a vay-ry clay-ver main!"

Then she could not sit down to tea without "*my lard*"—she could not go an excursion to Studley, Harewood, or Knaresborough, unless he were of the party, to "poynt out avery abe-jeet war-thy at-tane-shun."

Who could stand out against batteries such as these? at any rate, it was not in the nature of the earl of Kilrennie: it is certain he was no more of a genius than he was of an Adonis—his mind was no geir shut up in an unsightly casket—gem and casket were nearly as possible upon a par; but he had sense enough—was, if you please, *gourmand*

gourmand enough to relish the good things of this world, and had, moreover, no objection to hear himself praised, even for “perfections not his own;” he had, besides, discernment sufficient to see and feel that Miss Sharkem was a beautiful unaffected girl—would do no discredit, though *only an attorney's daughter*, to his coronet, and, above all, that her money and acres would enable him to rekindle the fires in his ancestors' halls in the north of Scotland, for he had, though I have surnamed him Lackland, something, though little more than a ruinous pile of stones, which he denominated a family castle.

His lordship flattered himself—and had he not reason, with his coronet in one hand, and such an encouraging papa and mamma on the other?—that the

motto proper for his courtship would prove—

“Veni—vidi—vici!”

But, alas! we must agree with Addison—

“ ‘Tis not in mortals to command success,”

for the right honourable the earl of Kilenzie, whose title bore date 1414, instead of a blushing acknowledgment of the honour done to her, was doomed to hear the daughter of *nobody knows who* politely but decidedly pronounce, she *never* could be his.

Joy—joy for our friend Rodney!—he felt it—it thrilled through every part of his frame.

“Dear, dear Fanny!” he exclaimed: “oh, Mr. Sympson, how you revive me!”

me! So she would not be sacrificed to this hideous lord—his title was nothing in her estimation? But go on—perhaps, after all—”

“ Don’t trouble yourself with *perhaps*, Mr. Rodney,” continued Sympson, “ for she perseveringly refused the little nobleman: her father pressed—her mother entreated; the former insisted—the latter commanded; but Fanny remained immovable—on the article of marriage she determined to consult her own feelings.”

“ And she still continues thus minded—still is Fanny Sharkem?” interrogated Rodney.

“ She is certainly still Fanny Shar-ken,” resumed Sympson, “ and according to my idea of her, will never consent to be countess of Kilremmie; but you

you shiall hear all we know, Rodney, if you have patience."

Rodney was silent, and Sympson's narrative again went forward.

" My lord, of course, was astonished beyond measure at the young lady's refusing him, for he had never heard *his own opinion*, that he was quite an Adonis, contradicted; all the ladies he met with simpered and smiled when he drew near; his reels gilded every face in the different assembly-rooms he frequented with laughter: what could all this mean but admiration? And then his title, his ancient title, bearing date so very far back! and to be refused by a little low-born *country attorney's daughter*, whom he naturally supposed would have been ready to kiss the ground he trode on, when she heard

of the honour he proposed conferring! He felt almost determined to quarrel with his intended papa-in-law; but then my lord called to mind the venison, the grapes, the good things of all sorts and sizes he should lose by it, and he changed his intention into mere loverlike complaints of Miss Sharkem's cruelty.

“ The solicitor was *so* sorry, *so* angry, *so every thing* that the earl wished, that he determined to renew his attack again and again, and strive to win the lady by perseverance, if she should continue blind to his perfections and high rank.

“ From this time, my lord became Fanny's complete shadow; he danced, rode, walked with her, sat next her at table. The world said—‘ *It must be a match;*’ Mr. Sharkem did not contradict it;

it; but, in reality, Fanny remained deaf to her noble lover, and, excepting when she repeated her answer to his original suit, was silent to him.

“ Few young ladies are supposed to be pleased when papa or mainma announces that the time has arrived when they must quit the gay society of Harrowgate, and return to stupid home. Miss Sharkem proved an exception to the general rule, for never did she feel more genuine satisfaction than when she beheld Mrs. Abigail packing up for a removal:

“ My lord placed Miss Sharkem in the carriage, squeezed her hand, ogled, and sighed most affectingly:

“ Fanny bowed very graciously, and even rewarded him with a smile—the first she ever gave him, and, she trusted,

the

the last she should ever have an opportunity of bestowing in the same quarter: in truth, it was a smile of satisfaction which shot instantaneously, involuntarily, over her countenance, at the idea she was on the point of escaping from her tiresome persecutor.

“ Poor Fanny! her smile was, alas! premature; for papa and my lord had settled it that the latter was to follow them home in about a fortnight, and commence a new siege.

“ He came, and in a coroneted chariot, attended by two powdered lacquies, daubed from head to foot with gold lace, hired, as the generality of the neighbourhood believed, and most likely with Sharkem’s cash, for the express purpose of softening the obdurate Fanny, and rendering his lordship irresistible; but this

this gay set-out availed nothing; for lord Kilrennie in a coach-and-six, a chariot-and-four, or on foot, was all the same to Miss Sharkem."

"And does his lordship still persevere?" interrogated Rodney.

"Yes," returned Sympson, "and is actually at Sharkem's at this present moment, and some will have it with brightening hopes. The gossips see in every servant who goes from —— to York or Hull a messenger to hasten wedding clothes or order bridecake; but I feel inclined to bet any wager that Fanny Sharkem will never become lady Kilrennie, particularly after she is assured that a certain young friend of mine did not perish, as was apprehended, in Turon Bay—So keep up your spirits, Mr. Rodney."

"By

“ By all manner of means,” bawled lieutenant Hatchway; “ faint heart never won fair lady,’ you know—no weather in the world was ever *so* squally, but a calm followed in due time;” with a thousand other of his quaint sentences of encouragement, and wound up all by two lines from his favourite ballad of “ *Black-ey'd Susan*:”—

“ Change as ye list, ye winds, her heart shall be
The faithful compass that still turns to thee.”

Rodney sighed, but said little in return; and when the day began to dawn, he shook hands with his friends, and set forward towards the residence of his mother, which lay at no more than two miles distance from Napperton Abbey: there he felt it his duty to pay an early visit — there he should probably hear more

more detailed accounts of the Sharkein family—there be assisted with advice as to the best method of announcing his return in safety to the yet tenderly-be-loved Fanny.

CHAPTER IV.

Ah, happy hills ! ah, pleasing shade !
Where once my careless childhood stray'd
A stranger yet to pain—
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

GRAY.

DANESDALE, to which Rodney was journeying, was associated in his mind with many pleasing and early recollections. It was an estate which his grandfather had purchased when Yorkshire

shire wold-land had no very high character with the agriculturist. There almost the first crop of that elegant grass, the cinquefoil, flourished in the North of England—there Scotch, and other firs and forest trees, had been planted to a considerable extent.*

Our hero could recollect almost every tree on the farm, for he had been there almost constantly till he went to Napperton Abbey at four years of age, and during several years of subsequent residence with his old cousin he had been indulged in frequent excursions thither; it had been named by his father's

eldest

* The place here described really exists, and belonged to the author's grandfather, and by purchase is now vested in a family of the name of Broadley: several of the characters in this chapter are likewise drawings from nature.

eldest sister, from certain tumuli on the estate, where a great number of Danes had been interred*, after one of those dreadful battles so common during the Heptarchy, when the northern horde made frequent descents upon this island.

Rodney walked quickly, for the morning was delightful, though December, and the roads excellent, from a severe frost, and he consequently soon arrived at the summit of a hill half way between Napperton and his mother's, which was crowned with a clump of trees, planted by his grandfather's own hand. Here he could not forbear pausing—here he could not forbear remarking how much the firs were increased

since

*

* The author's aunt actually named the place here introduced, which before her time had borne the brusque freezing epithet of "Cold Harbour."

since last he saw them—"And the hand," thought he, "which inserted them in the soil is mouldering in the dust—the eye which would have most delighted in their progress is shut in darkness."

A tear dropped to the shortness and uncertainty of human life, the vanity of human projects; but I trust it appeared not in the sight of Heaven as a murmur, for it was immediately followed by an acknowledgment—"All is for the best. Were man assured," added he, "that he should not live till he saw his undertakings flourish, how few would build, would plant, would speculate! the world would soon become a desert."

The remainder of his walk was through the wildest wold scenery that

can

can possibly be conceived; long ranges of hills, whose brown sides were speckled with flocks of clambering sheep, and deep-winding vallies, where occasionally a turf hut, or a solitary shepherd, presented themselves, stretched out on every side.

Rodney, however, was not in a mood to pay much attention to objects like these—his eye was only anxious to behold the blue smoke rising from the dale “in which his widow'd mother dwelt;” this eagerly-desired object was soon before him, for, from the brow of the very next eminence, he looked down full upon the dear abode;

“ Deep in the windings of a woody vale,
By solitude and deep-surrounding shades
— — — conceal'd *,”

* Thomson.

it reared its humble head. Spot cannot well be conceived, where the flower might more securely

“ Blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air,”

The habitation was small, for it had originally been nothing more than a very inferior farmstead, to which a couple of moderate-sized apartments were added at the time when Rodney's grandfather made it his home. By the hands of the same old gentleman, every tree in a pretty extensive wood of pines, to the north and east, was planted.

The house fronted upon a small field of green turf, with a garden to the right, and a range of buildings necessary for the farm on the left. The road which

which Rodney pursued led down nearly in a line with the latter.

“ There,” soliloquized he, leaning on a gate at the top of the hill, “ there is assembled a group of beings, the nearest and dearest to me; they are now preparing to enter on their daily occupations, unconscious of the increase which their domestic circle is about to receive, little thinking that their lamented Rodney is so near.”

As he spake, several females were clearly discernible, passing and repassing, within the upper windows of their retired dwelling.

With the sight originated an idea that his abrupt appearance might be productive of bad, if not fatal, consequences to his affectionate mother, who no doubt

(for from Sympson he heard that none of his various letters from Cochin-China had reached their intended destination), felt a clear conviction, that in this world her eyes were never more to rest upon her darling Rodney.

The smoking chimney of a cottage attached to the farming offices below pointed out a place whence he might cautiously open a communication with the principal habitation of the dale, without coming upon its inmates unawares.

Towards it he bent his steps, until they were momentarily arrested by a voice, proceeding therefrom, chaunting, in shrill notes, an ancient ballad, "The Lord of Lern," to which he had, in childhood, frequently listened with delight,

light, from the lips of his nurse, Betty Dry, a servant in his grandfather's family.

“Perhaps,” thought he, “it may be Betty herself: if so, what better mode of communication can I hit upon with my beloved relatives than through her agency? She is a clever though unpolished creature, and will manage every thing for me judiciously.”

He walked instantly to the door of the cottage, and, much to his satisfaction, perceived, at the first look, that the singer was in reality the person he suspected: she was twirling a large wool-wheel, and chaunting her rude lay as she went, “for want of thought.”

“Lo-ard a marcy hoo you flay * a body!” exclaimed she, turning suddenly

ly round at the sound of Rodney's foot-steps.

“ What, Betty, are you afraid of me?” interrogated our hero; “ I thought you would have rejoiced to see me safe and sound.”

“ Why, bairn *,” replied Betty, “ I never seed you in all my born days, at I knaws on; but you sailor lads are sike comical chaps, thay’rs nae knawing what to mak o’ ye.”

“ So you’ve entirely forgotten him you once nursed—him to whom you have told many a long story, and so often sung ‘ The Lord of Lorn,’ and ‘ The Knight in Green,’ even your *aren bonnie lahtel* Rodney?*”

“ Rodney!”

* Child.

† *Little* is pronounced *lahtel* in many parts of Yorkshire.

“ Rodney !” repeated Betty ; “ I never nossed but yan* o’ th’ neame, an’ he, poor fellow, gat drownded ower seas.”

Rodney soon convinced Betty to the contrary ; and she, as unwillingly as Mrs. Hatchway had done in a former instance, made haste to set by her wheel, and invited him to walk into her parlour, observing—“ There’s a bit o’ fire there, and naebody in it but my mother, poor auld thing, and she’s grown despart silly. She’s seer not to ken ye, for at times she hardly knaws Jew-arge † and me.”

The parlour, of which she immediately opened the door, was a room containing two bedsteads of black oak, set in panels, with ponderous poles of the

same material, and most heavy and elaborate workmanship, not very dissimilar to that exhibited at Leicester, where Richard the Third is said to have spent the night previous to the celebrated battle which lost him a crown.

Near to the fireplace, on a very low stool, sat an aged matron, covered with a faded scarlet cloak and black silk hood, and knitting a brown worsted stocking; she did not turn round, or exhibit any proof of noticing their approach.

“Poor old nurse!” sighed Rodney, for in her he recognized a woman* who had been known in the family by that title from his earliest infancy, and long before.

“Mother!—mother!” shouted Betty,
in

* Anne Thomson was the name of the woman hero introduced.

in a loud key, for, according to her language, the old dame was ‘despart hard of hearing*,’ “mother! here’s maister Rodney, him ’at you used to mak sae mickle to dea aboot when he was a bairn, comed to ax ye hoo ye dea†.”

“ Rodney! Rodney!” repeated the old woman, “he was a bonnie bairn, Betty, God luv him! but he’s de-ad, ye knew, lang sin,” and she held on knitting.

“ She’s varry daft‡, ye see,” resumed Betty, apologizing for her superannuated mother’s inattention to him..

“ Don’t disturb her, for God’s sake!” said Rodney, sighing at the idea of what poor human nature may be reduced to,

* Very deaf.

† Do.

‡ Stupid. BULLY.

and calling to mind, at the same time, Dr. Samuel Johnson's memorable line—

“In life's last scenes what prodigies surprise!”

He then proceeded to explain what his filial fears had suggested, as to the effects which might ensue from suddenly presenting himself at his mother's, and requested her opinion as to the best method of introducing himself there.

“Lord luv ye for being sae thought-
ful aboot poor madam!” cried Betty:
“but you were awl'as* a good bairn,
Maister Rodney, an' I can see you're
yan still. Why, what do you think if
I were just to step up to th' house, an'
ax for Maister Matty; my auld man's
oft

* Always.

oft wanting him about sheep and sike, so that misses 'il never think *owt** about his coming on here a bit."

"The best plan in the world," replied Rodney; "thank you—thank you most heartily for the hint."

Betty opened the door, in order to perform her errand, but had not occasion to cross her own threshold, for Mr. Matthew St. Paul was, at the very moment, approaching the cottage on his pony.

"You're the varry man we're a-wanting, sur!" exclaimed Betty; "pra' ye leet†, for we've getten sike a stranger i' th' parlour, as ye lahtel think on."

Matthew alighted, and was most agreeably surprised to find the stranger thus announced a no less important per-

sonage than the often-deplored companion of his youthful sports—his dear brother Rodney.

“ Your caution, beloved Rodney,” said he, after half-an-hour had been consumed in mutual explanation, “ was truly considerate, for I do think your unexpected appearance would have quite overwhelmed our excellent mother, who though, thank God! in pretty good general health, has become, by the pressure of domestic trials, very nervous. Ellen and Betsey will know the best how to break your return to her, so to them I shall immediately return,” and away he ran to the house.

In a very few minutes he returned, accompanied by his sisters, who were ready to devour Rodney with their caresses and congratulations.

With

With them he adjourned very soon to his mother's, and it was agreed the old lady should be prepared for his appearance, by a report that a young sailor had been at Betty Dry's, who brought word that Rodney still survived.

Delightful were the sensations of the hero of this tale, when he felt himself once more safely sheltered by a paternal roof; but they were more than the most eloquent pen can delineate, and must be felt to be understood, when he heard the well-remembered voice of his revered mother, inquiring, from the top of the staircase, the reason why her daughters had hurried so precipitately to Betty's cottage?—"Nurse is not worse than common, I hope?" said she.

"No, mamma," replied Ellen, the eldest

eldest of the young ladies ; “ but Betty has had a person there, who knew our poor Rodney abroad, and says that —”

“ Does he say he lives ? ” interrogated the anxious mother, descending quickly as she spake. “ I must see the person, girls, without delay.”

She advanced into the parlour—her eyes encountered those of the stranger. What eye can scrutinize like that of a mother ? At one glance Mrs. St. Paul knew her child—her long-lost child ! The next moment beheld her sunk, nearly lifeless, in his arms. Soon she revived, to hear and see her maternal conclusions verified beyond the possibility of doubt.

Happy moment ! — hour that can rarely be equalled in felicity among the children

children of men! A mother—who so full of feeling?—who so uniformly, genuinely kind, so *really* affectionate?—a mother recovers her son as from the grave!—she feels those pulses throb she feared were still for ever!—those eyes are turned, beaming with filial tenderness upon her, which she apprehended were closed in death!

CHAPTER V.

Mute and uncertain, and amazed,
As on a vision Bertram gaz'd.

WALTER SCOTT.

SEVERAL days elapsed before Rodney and his family agreed upon the best method of informing Fanny Sharkem that her youthful favourite had once more reached his native island.

The general opinion was, the sweet girl would rejoice at the news; and they, at the same time, all agreed her father would experience a quite contrary sensation—that he would regard our hero

as

as the decided interrupter of his plans for Fanny's elevation to the peerage, and consequently set his face determinately against him.

How reach Miss Sharkem's ear? appeared the important consideration. This must not be attempted through papa; letters were liable to be intercepted—and, if it were at all suspected from what quarter they came, *would* be intercepted. A personal interview and explanation were therefore deemed most advisable.

The place of Sharkem's residence was only a few miles from Danesdale, and towards it our hero proceeded; his plan was, to call at Sharkem's, inquire for Fanny's maid, and by her convey an account of his arrival from abroad to her mistress.

The

The increase of the old solicitor's wealth, since Rodney's departure from England, was clearly manifested by the altered aspect of his dwelling, which had swelled, from a moderate-sized family house, into quite an elegant mansion, by the addition of two large wings; the whole front was uniformly stuccoed, in imitation of Portland stone; what had, seven or eight years before, been a mere grass-plat, divided by a narrow gravel-walk to the principal entrance, was now centered by a crescent-like shrubbery, and fenced from the road by high iron paling, with an admission-gate at each angle.

Rodney felt quite panic-struck at the sight of such a splendid place, and scarcely would have had resolution to approach it, but for the assurance of a woman

man casually passing, who told him decidedly, that lawyer Sharkem lived there.

At the very moment when he opened one gate, a gay equipage drove out at the other, and he could distinguish, through the trees, a youthful female form within it, to whom his fancy gave the features of his dear Fanny.

“Perhaps,” supposed he, “her companion may be the hideous lord Kilrennie. Perhaps his persevering assiduities have at last persuaded her to become his.”

So argued fear—hope told a more flattering tale, and said, that though time might have worn out the traces of little Rodney, yet Fanny Sharkem was not surely of a nature to sacrifice herself to a creature

creature such as the earl had been represented to him.

Our hero's heart revived; he determined to attempt seeing her, or somehow or other acquainting her with his return—his return with affections all her own.—“She *cannot* have forgotten her Rodney!” he sighed, and went forward to the centre entrance of the house.

A housemaid who observed his motions, and had no objection to regale her eyes with a nearer survey of our well-looking friend, Rodney St. Paul, beckoned him to an open window, and kindly informed him, that—“None but *quality* went up the portico steps,” and that “if he had any business with the clerks or the servants, he must go to one of the side doors.”

He thanked her for this instruction, and was upon the point of inquiring for Miss Sharkem's *own woman*, when the girl turned suddenly from him, and disappeared, possibly called away on business—*probably* descended to the servants'-hall, in hopes of there displaying her beauty more advantageously to the handsome sailor.

Two entrances presented themselves in the wing of the building nearest Rodney; towards the first of them, which stood open, he walked, and found it conducted to a small vestibule, surrounded by the doors of various apartments. He knocked at one of them, and was immediately answered—“Come in!”

Rodney half opened the door, and civilly

civilly inquired if he could be directed where to find Miss Sharkem's maid?

“It is one of the most strange, odd, and unaccountable things that can be thought, conceived, or imagined,” cried a voice, very different from the first speaker, and which Rodney instantly knew to be Sharkem's, “that after the public notice in writing duly set forth on the outer door, any person or persons should intrude here, to the great and manifest let, hindrance, or impediment of my private business, with any message for the servants'-hall.”

Rodney apologized for his blunder, and was retreating, as he did not feel any particular relish for an interview with the solicitor at the present: but he was not suffered to escape so easily; there

there was something in the tones of his voice which singularly affected Mr. Sharkem, and gave an unconquerable longing to behold the person from whom they issued.

“ Throw the door open, Wilson,” said the lawyer; and he was obeyed so promptly, that the figure of Rodney stood distinctly revealed.

Family voices are as common as family faces, perhaps more so, according to the author’s observations—in both Rodney was a complete St. Paul.

Sharkem saw it—felt it. The sailor’s dress, too, was not without effect; it convinced him he was actually looking upon Rodney, the quondam favourite of the old squire of Napperton.

With all Sharkem’s self-command, he could not avoid starting, and sinking momentarily

momentarily back in the Bath chair where he sat, wrapped round with a flannel dressing-gown. Scott, I think, somewhere says—

“ No spectre can the charnel send,
So dreadful as an injur’d friend.”

Had Sharkem injured Rodney, that *he* should feel thus strangely affected?

Reader, if you ask this question, I can only say, in answer to it, you must wait patiently my time of development. You may surmise as you please—indulge in the wide labyrinth of conjecture; at present I shall only say, that from whatever cause his start originated, he soon displayed not one outward and visible sign of confusion, and at first seemed inclined not to reveal his recognition of poor Rodney, for he began with

with saying, though without looking at the object addressed—" You inquired after, or asked for, Miss Sharkem's maid, I think—that is to say, if I was not deceived or mistaken, young man; and what, pray, may be your—your business with the said inquired-for person?"

Rodney answered not a word; in the first place, he thought the question impertinent, and then he did not, by any means, feel inclined to reply ingenuously.

Sharkem turned upon him an interrogatory glance, and then, as if struck with some sudden impression (in fact, even in this short space of time, his active mind had suggested advantages from an immediate acknowledgment

of Rodney, which did not at first strike him), exclaimed—"Why, I surely and decidedly must have looked upon, seen, or contemplated that face or physiognomy before?"

Rodney still remained dumb.

Not so the solicitor; he proceeded with—"Those lines of countenance, *alias* features, are, must be, decidedly, assuredly, familiar to me. Is it possible?—can it be, that you are Mr. Rodney St. Paul, for whom we have for so long a period wept, deplored, and sorrowed, almost, as good worthy Dr. S—— says, 'like men without hope?'

Our hero merely bowed assent.

"And," continued Sharkem, "not to announce, declare, and present yourself

self to such an old tried friend as me! Wilson, wheel me directly into my *own office*; there, my dear, excellent Mr. Rodney, I may enjoy your conversation at leisure. You see what application, and attention, and fagging at business does!" continued he, as he was travelling from his head-clerk's office to his *sanctum sanctorum*. "We pay very, very heavy fines, pains, and penalties, for light and trifling rewards: but I rest easy, satisfied, and content; I've done the best for my dear family, according to my poor, mean, insignificant talents. Yes, yes, I've truly right and reason to be thankful."

The room in which Rodney soon found himself alone with Mr. Sharkem seemed adapted, in every possible way,

for privacy; double doors, lined with green baize, completely defied the quickest-eared listener—whilst windows of ground glass excluded the most piercing eye.

“My good young friend,” said the lawyer, the moment they were *tête-à-tête*, “you cannot think, suppose, or imagine, how pleased, gratified, and delighted I am to see you. Oh, how enraptured, overjoyed, and overpowered would the truly excellent inestimable old squire have been to have witnessed and beheld this moment! I wish to Heaven he had!”

A something rose in his throat, which rendered the last words not quite audible; but he soon recovered a clear articulation, and went on.—“Good, I
may

may well and truly designate, and call, and describe the venerable worthy; for you doubtless know how *good* he has been to my sweet child, Fanny. Oh, I wish you had returned but twelve calendar months earlier than the present date! But it cannot be helped, or altered, or avoided: Providence ordereth all things and circumstances for the wisest and best. We are poor, blind, ignorant creatures; never, therefore, never mind, Rodney, dear Rodney: I've some interest at the high court of admiralty, boy, and any thing, every thing, in my poor limited way, must, ought, and shall be yours. We'll push you forward, I'll warrant you, till you're made post; and then, as men of your profession say and observe, 'it's all plane-sailing,

ing, till you hoist an admiral's flag. Your good departed old cousin prophesied, you know and remember, that you would live to be an admiral; and I shall glory and delight in being the instrument and means of fulfilling and bringing it to pass.

“ Dear Rodney,” repeated he, as if it were the burden of his song, “ you can't think, conceive, or imagine, how pleased, gratified, and delighted I am to see you. But where have you been? What have you been about all this time? Why did not you write to us?” And then, without waiting for an answer, he ran on, saying—“ How my inestimable wife will feel exhilarated by your return! How happy, too, my sweet little Fanny *will* be to shake hands

hands with her former playfellow—to talk respecting, and converse upon, and laugh over, all your juvenile romps and gambols heretofore had, done, and acted at the ancient abbey, or mansion of Napperton! They were joyful days, Rodney, dear Rodney. How happy, likewise, it will make Miss Sharkem, to introduce you to the notice and acquaintance of her—namely, of the right honourable the earl of Kilrennie, viscount this and baron that—I can't attempt or undertake to name or declare half his style or titles, without the fear of misnomers before mine eyes. You must know, my dear young friend—you see I treat you just and identically as one of ourselves—you must know and understand, that my said daughter

is to marry the right honourable lord before-mentioned; and a most excellent, exemplary man—nobleman I ought more accurately to have said, he is. Lucky little rogue, ha, Rodney! this dear sweet little Fanny of ours. Who could have guessed, thought, or imagined, or conjectured, that she would have become a countess? How your worthy old cousin would have gloried! Oh, he was an excellent creature!"

Reader, you feel exhausted, I doubt not, by this prolixity; consider then, what must have been poor young St. Paul's sensations, who could scarcely have suffered more under the hand of inquisitors; he actually sunk under it—sunk into a chair.

It was time, I suppose Sharkem thought,

thought, for a lenient, which he intended to administer, by saying—"Dear me! whilst I discourse, I forget and overlook that you would, and may, most probably wish and desire to see our dear Fanny, or Mrs. Sharkem, or peradventure both, ha, Rodney?"

"Certainly—by all means!" answered Rodney, whose heart bounded at the bare idea; and, for the moment, he forgot the carriage he had seen drive off, and the lady he imagined to be in it.

A bell was pulled—Mrs. and Miss Sharkem were inquired for. Alas! they were out; they had taken an airing in the earl's chariot.

"How *mal-àpropos*—how unfortunate!" observed the solicitor. "But don't take it to heart, Rodney—to-mor-

row you may be more in luck—to-morrow you shall be received and acknowledged. We dine at five: but come early—let us have a day of you; there is not a being on earth, created or existing, for whom we *all* have a higher regard and affection. What a pity—ten thousand thousand pities, you ever went to sea! If you had not, you might now perhaps have been—But it is no matter grieving—all's for the best. But let me order in sandwiches, wine, porter, for you. Any thing my poor house, larder, or cellar, afford, is, ought indeed, dear Rodney, to be at your service."

Clients were very opportunely brought from Wilson's office to that of his master at this moment. Rodney most cheerfully

cheerfully made way for them, and retreated under a heavy volley of—"Remember to-morrow—and come early, they'll have so many things to ask and inquire after; women, you know, are proverbially curious. Good-bye, Rodney, dear Rodney!"

Poor Rodney had nearly a sleepless night; but, notwithstanding, he contrived to knock at Sharkem's door several hours previous to the time appointed for dinner, being determined to have time sufficient for explanation. His knock was readily answered, but no company *could* be admitted that day, for Mr. Sharkem had been suddenly seized in the night with gout at the stomach, and was ordered to be kept quite still.

The next day, and the next, and the next, furnished answers somewhat similar; Mr. Sharkem was no better—the ladies were in constant attendance on him.

On the fifth morning, so much to the astonishment of our hero that he could at first scarcely credit what he heard, it was reported to him, that all the Sharkem family had set forward to Bath, the waters there being recommended to the old gentleman by all his physicians, as the only thing which could possibly renovate his constitution.

Many hours had not elapsed after the news of this unexpected movement had reached Rodney, before a note, to the following import, reached him at his mother's:—

“ Miss

“ Miss Sharkem feels extremely hurt that she cannot have the honour of renewing her acquaintance with Mr. Rodney St. Paul, her dear father’s illness conspiring with *other important reasons* to prevent it.”

Was the production *really* from Fanny’s pen? because the general inquiry in our hero’s family. It cannot—it is not! Fanny could not write so coolly to one for whom she had ever professed the warmest of affections.

The characters did certainly resemble those of Miss Sharkem, when she had formerly corresponded with her little sailor. But what of that? suggested every

every heart; Sharkem has people who can do any thing—the letter is no more to be depended upon as genuine, than the solicitor's report that his daughter is to marry lord Kilrennie.

Finally, it was settled and agreed, in solemn conclave at Mrs. St. Paul's, that Rodney must endeavour to gain the ear of his Fanny, and alone be convinced, from her own lips, that she had forgotten the youthful

Councils that they two had shar'd,
The mutual vows, the hours that they had spent,
When they had chid the hasty-footed time
For parting them.

SHAKESPEARE.

In short, Rodney must, and that without delay, go to Bath—must, if possible,

possible, prevent Fanny from being sacrificed to a man like the earl, for whom not a living soul believed she had the smallest atom of regard.

CHAPTER VI.

His mountain back might well be said,
To measure height against his head,
And lift itself above;
Yet spite of all that nature did,
To make his uncouth form forbid,
This creature dar'd to love.

PARNELL.

THE Sharkems did not preceede our friend Rodney, in reaching the delightful city of Bath, more than eight days. It was not his intention to interrupt their domestic arrangements before they felt themselves quite at home—indeed, not to interrupt them at all by calling, but

but to depend entirely upon circumstances for introducing himself, and coming to an éclaircissement with his beloved Fanny. He secured a lodgings in the old-fashioned part of the town, and from thence determined to reconnoitre the proceedings of his northern neighbours.

For several days he saw nothing of them; this he attributed to the extreme dampness of the weather, or perhaps to the increased illness of papa, after so long a journey, with the gout flying about him, like a bird undetermined where to build its nest.

The second conjecture was the right one; for the old solicitor had suffered so considerably from his hasty travelling, that although he was particularly anxious to have his lovely daughter exhibited

hibited to the fashionables of Bath as the forthcoming countess of Kilrennie, he could not possibly dispense with her attendance in his sick chamber for a fortnight after he became an inhabitant of Laura-place; at the termination of that period, the intended victim of parental ambition, with extreme reluctance, stepped into my lord Kilrennie's chariot, to take her first drive through the streets of Bath.

How different were the sensations of this interesting girl and her father at this moment! He exultingly beheld her, from his window, handed to the coro-netted carriage by her noble admirer; she trembled like a person proceeding on some very painful errand, and, instead of courting attention, shrunk back as far as possible from the gaze of curiosity.

sity. These feelings would have been completely reversed, could either party have foreseen the events to which this important airing was to lead.

Rodney, most fortunately, on the morning when poor Fanny was thus unwillingly sent forth in state, had turned his steps towards the fashionable promenade of Milsom-street: the weather was tolerable—the concourse of dashing equipages immense; he gazed anxiously into each as it rolled slowly along, but not a face did his eyes rest upon, which at all reminded him of the fair object he was seeking. He began to torture himself with a thousand lover-like conjectures: instead of the old gentleman, his beautiful daughter must, alas! be ill; perhaps the family had, for some reason yet to be discovered,

quitted

quitted Bath; worse than all, probably worn out by the importunities of her father, Fanny might have consented to marry my lord, and was confined at home with preparations for her approaching nuptials.

He almost despaired: but courage, dear Rodney! relief to thy anxiety is at hand. In the very moment when his spirits were at the lowest ebb, a chariot-and-four drove rapidly past him, the horses of which seemed to have got more in them than their pigmy driver had strength to manage. A female was within, in dreadful agitation.

Our hero followed with alacrity; he anticipated some dreadful accident.

The horses kept a straight forward course through the next street; but, at the angle of it, they started, and bringing

ing the carriage in contact with a high curb stone, it was overturned instantly, and almost dashed to pieces; the horses broke loose and galloped away, kicking and plunging most tremendously.

From the little deformed object on the box, and the coronet, Rodney had a fearful apprehension that Fanny Shar-kem might prove the lady thus terribly exposed to destruction. Any human being in such circumstances would, I am sure, have received his ready assistance—how much more, when he suspected it to be the creature he most loved!

In a moment the unfortunate lady was snatched from the fragments of her vehicle—in the next she was conveyed into the nearest shop, and, without waiting for the ceremony of invitation from

from its owner, deposited upon the sofa of an interior apartment. Harts-horn and water, volatiles, and every other assistance which humanity could suggest, were offered with the greatest promptitude.

Rodney hailed with rapture the reviving colour—the opening eye, for he saw that the being whom he had held in his arms—whose life he had probably saved, was indeed her on whom all his future earthly happiness depended.—“Fanny! oh, my beloved Fanny!” burst involuntarily from his lips whilst he hung over her, bathing her transparent temples, as she seemed hovering between life and death.

The sounds of his voice alone were wonderful in operation, for she almost immediately looked up, fixed her blue eyes

eyes upon the speaker, and sighed; at the same time interrogating—"Where am I? Who are you, sir?"

" You are safe—you are safe!" exultingly cried Rodney; " the happy mortal who has assisted you is one whom I hope seven years of absence has not erased from your memory."

" Are you Rodney—Rodney St. Paul?" asked Miss Sharkem; and before he could answer, she added, in tremulous accents, "there is something about you which tells me you must be so."

" I am—I am, indeed!" answered Rodney; " and you have not then lost the remembrance of me? But, alas! alas! I fear you have forgotten me in any other light than that of an ordinary acquaintance! Your note about a fortnight

night ago speaks to me, alas! too plainly on this point."

" Note!" repeated Fanny: " what mean you, Rodney? Till this moment, I solemnly avow I was unconscious of your present existence."

The lady of the shop, mademoiselle Fripomme, who was pretty conversant with human nature, perceiving that her hartshorn and water were now no longer necessary, any more than her personal attendance, very judiciously withdrew, without appearing anxious to probe too deep into the secrets of her accidental guests.

She had indeed got an ample " recompence of reward," in having a young lady brought into her *magazine des modes*, from a noble lord's overturned carriage; and then, that in her deliverer

she

she had found a quondam lover! Oh! the tale was deliciously romantic—quite calculated to fill her shop with visitors for at least a week to come, who would, of course, be desirous to know all particulars, and in return surely some of them must become purchasers of her fashionable articles *à-la-mode de Paris*.

An explanation followed mademoiselle's retreat, which proved decidedly that Fanny had been kept in utter ignorance of Rodney's interview with her father—that she had neither written nor sanctioned the note to him—and that she neither was nor would be engaged to marry the earl of Kilrennie: in short, she blushingly confessed that she had been so long accustomed to regard Rodney St. Paul as possessed of the prin-

pal place in her affections, that she could not divest herself of the idea.

Mademoiselle considerately allowed half-an-hour to be consumed by this *tête-à-tête*, without informing Miss Sharkem that one of the attendants on her unfortunate equipage was in waiting with a sedan-chair to convey her home. I say “considerately,” because surely in less than that lapse of time no lady whatever could have recovered from the most ordinary fright, much less such an escape as has just been recorded.

Rodney very humanely replied to mademoiselle’s information, that Miss Sharkem could not possibly be removed yet.

“I certainly am still very nervous,”
said

said the young lady; “ and if the man has not sent an account of my accident to Laura-place, I should think it would be best for me to remain here a little longer.”

No communication had been made to papa and mamma; the chairmen therefore were ordered to wait.

For the first time since her overthrow, the noble little Jehu, who would have the honour of driving “ her chariot for one day,” occurred to her mind.

Allow not this tardy recollection of the right honourable gentleman to be ascribed to a lack of humanity on the part of the sweet Fanny—her gentle bosom, reader, glowed, I can safely assure you, with an universal benevolence; attribute it rather to certain peculiar circumstances in her present situ-

ation, which temporarily banished from her remembrance the existence of such a being as my lord Kilrennie.

She was pleased to hear that he had been conveyed into an adjoining house, and was considered to have been *more afraid than hurt*; the coachman and lacquey too had likewise escaped from their perilous adventure with some trifling bruises.

Though Miss Sharkem seemed at the first to revive very promisingly, yet she remained full two hours under mademoiselle Fripponer's roof before she ventured on announcing that her chair might be brought into the shop; and when she *was* led to it by our hero, she leaned so languidly on his supporting arm, as to excite "a thousand pities," from the tender-hearted young milliners

ners in the shop, "that she had not remained with them a short time longer — A little more hartshorn and water, another hour, would have wrought wonders," was the universal declaration of the feeling Misses.

" Day would av do noting—noting at all!" exclaimed mademoiselle, with a mysterious shrug of the shoulders; " it be *l'affaire du cœur*—*l'affaire du cœur!* — ah, *ciel!* hartshorn an' water, indeet!"

The countenance and manner of the discerning Frenchwoman, more than her words, convinced the young ladies of the needle that she had picked up some highly interesting particulars during her attendance on her recently-departed guests.

With one accord they turned an in-

quiring glance upon her. She understood them, and replied—dear good soul! it was not at all her way to keep any human creature a moment unnecessarily in suspense, by repeating, *verbatim et literatim*, every conjecture she had formed—every thing she had ingeniously found out respecting Fanny and Rodney.

“ Dear me, how very romantic!”—
“ Well, 'tis quite pretty enough for a novel; I wish Mrs. M——e or Mrs. S——t, or Mrs. Anybody, would put it in a book!”—“ Oh, I long to know how it will end!” and a variety of exclamations of similar import, were the chorusses after every pause in mademoiselle's “ romance of real life.”

But I digress improperly by thus detailing the chit-chat of a milliner's shop, which

which will be so easily and generally guessed, whilst my readers are anxiously expecting farther details of what passed between Miss Sharkein and her happy favourite Rodney, previous to the dissolution of their *tête-à-tête*.

Reader, mark me, it would be the highest of high treasons in the court of Cupid, for me to indulge you with *all* the conversation; I will, however, venture to tell you, that mutual vows of unchangeable attachment were given and received, and that Fanny entranced her attached Rodney by announcing that he might meet with her again at the dress-ball on the following evening, which was the time fixed upon by Mrs. Sharkein for her daughter's *entrée* on the *beau monde* of Bath.

The slumbers which closed the eyes

of our young lovers on the night succeeding their unexpected renounter were productive of dreams so delightful, that they awoke from them in the highest spirits—spirits which were not even damped by the recollection that Fanny was on the point of making her first appearance at the rooms, conducted by lord Kilrennie; so little indeed was the latter circumstance regarded by them, that they looked forward most impatiently for the hour of exhibition; and Fanny, contrary to the expectations of her father, grcatly of course to his satisfaction, departed for the gay scene of action with a countenance beaming delight in every feature, and eyes completely out-sparkling the jewels with which her lovely person was most profusely adorned.

On

On account of Mrs. Sharkem's having a severe cold, the young *debutante* was chaperoned by the viscountess Langburn, a Yorkshire lady (whose husband was under pecuniary obligations to old Sharkem of considerable magnitude); and never young person on *coming out* was honoured by a greater share of notice. Her beauty was sufficiently striking to have insured a flattering reception, but this was not her sole attraction—her story had gained ground universally, even in the short space of twenty-four hours, thanks to the communicative French milliner and her ramifications, if I may be allowed so to denominate her journeywomen and apprentices.

On their entering the rooms, every eye was directed to Miss Sharkem—

..

every tongue was employed in whispering something to a near neighbour respecting her. The inexperienced Fanny had not the smallest notion that she was the cause of the bustle which surrounded her, but ascribed it altogether to the custom of public places; she therefore calmly contemplated the gay and busy throng, and bore the scrutinizing glances levelled at her from belle and beau as unblushingly as the most brazened votary of fashion: in reality, she was much more anxious to find out amidst the crowd *a face familiar to her*, than to look for the admiration of strangers.

The *face* sought for was discovered—its owner soon after stood by her side—soon was heard soliciting the honour of her hand for the first two dances.

Alas!

Alas! the application came too late—my lord Kilrennie had been promised the felicity of leading her out; for the second set the young lady had no existing engagement.

Who was the being blest by this information, reader, think you?

“Do you take me for a fool, Mr. Author? who else could it be but Rodney St. Paul? Happy Rodney!”

Happy he certainly was, and perhaps, reader, you think happier he could not be than when about to hand out his charming Fanny: if you do think so, you are mistaken, for he felt an augmentation of pleasure when Miss Sharkem announced, with an enchanting smile, that after the conclusion of the second dance she should devote the

remainder of the evening to conversation.

“What long endless figures! what persevering dancers!” exclaimed our heroine a thousand times during her engagement with the little lord: “well, I think we shall never come to a pause!”

They did pause, however, and in due time the next party commenced their operations.

“What an animated creature is Miss Sharkem! How different she dances *now!* No wonder—that’s the very man who carried her into mademoiselle’s—it’s her old lover, in short.”

“What is he?”

“Who is he?”

“Oh! a poor boy—quite a *protégé* of

of Mr. Sharkem's. He sent him to sea *entirely* at his own expence—I was told so this morning, *from the very best authority*; and now, you see, he wishes to carry off the daughter: what ingratitude—what unpardonable ingratitude! when by so doing he knows he shall prevent the daughter of his patron from becoming a countess; but this is generally the return one meets with from such sort of gentry—it quite disheartens one from patronizing."

" Well, I don't see any thing so very aspiring; the young man is certainly tolerably good looking, and you know—he, he, he! that as to family Mr. Sharkem has not *much* to boast—he, he, he! he's risen quite by *his wits*, I fancy—quite of the dunghill breed—he, he, he!"

These, and fifty times as many comments

ments and observations, were whispered—not always quite *whispered*, I must allow, during the time that our hero was dancing with his Fanny; but the young couple were too much taken up with each other—too anxious to reach the bottom, and then sit down and talk over their own affairs, to notice what was going on around them.

Their conversation was soon interrupted by lady Langburn, who came up to introduce a sir John Somebody: whoever it was, it made no difference to Fanny—she was fatigued, and must decline the intended honour.

Sir John walked off, not a little chagrined.

The lady viscountess remained—it was her duty to hover like a guardian angel round her young friend, and her duty

duty she felt determined to fulfil; as a proof of it, she whispered in Miss Shar-kem's ear—"Who is the person, my love, you have been dancing with? nobody seems to know his name or rank."

"He's a very old acquaintance indeed, lady Langburn," said Fanny, "a friend whom I have not seen for years, and with whom of course I wish to have a little conversation. I know all his relations, and it is but natural, your ladyship knows, for me to feel a desire of asking after their welfare."

Her ladyship was too faithful a chaperone to be thus easily driven off guard, and, I dare say, would not have quitted her post, had it not been for a whist-table (of which game she was dotingly

dotingly fond), that could not possibly be made up without her attendance.

For "*one rubber*" she promised to engage, and taking Miss Sharkein by the arm, exclaimed—"But I must not leave you here, my dear, or perhaps you will be changing your mind, and standing up again, and then the horses, which in consequence of your complaining fatigued I have ordered in half-an-hour, will have to wait—a thing which of all others lord Langburn dislikes; and he's a true Yorkshireman, you know, Miss Sharkein, in his attachment to his cattle."

Rodney was not to be manœuvred off in this way; he kept as close on one side as lady Langburn did on the other, and whilst her ladyship was attending

tending to her cards, had the supreme felicity of uninterruptedly conversing with his lovely companion.

The persecutions which poor Fanny was daily undergoing from the persevering addresses of the disagreeable lord Kilrennie formed, as will be imagined, a leading feature in the discourse.

With the bold ingenuousness characteristic of a youthful sailor, Rodney proposed, as the only method of effectually dispelling her troubles, that, without waiting for or soliciting the consent of parents, they should set off to that land where no marriage-act would prevent their being united in the indissoluble bonds of wedlock.—“Then, my dear Fanny,” added he, with a supplicating look, and tender pressure of the hand, “we might defy the efforts of this

this teasing little monkey of a lord completely."

Rodney fancied—flattered himself the tender pressure was returned. The young lady certainly did not *frown* upon him—did not shew such resentment at the proposal as to rise up hastily and end the conference; but still she gravely and decidedly discountenanced it—first, as a breach of filial duty, which nothing short of the harshest measures on the part of her father could justify.—“And then,” added she, “perhaps you are not aware, Rodney, that by marrying you, contrary to my father’s wishes, I shall lose all right and title to the estates of Napperton, for so runs your good ‘*old cousin’s* will.’”

“I know it all, Fanny—I know it all,” answered our hero; “but what is the

the estate of Napperton — what the whole county of York — the world — to me, in comparison with your precious self? Give me but a legal claim to this dear hand, and let my lord, or whoever your father pleases, take my worthy old cousin's estates."

Rodney, poor fellow! was just at an age when "love and a cottage" appeared the pinnacle of human felicity, and he consequently forgot what a poor provision would arise from the interest of fifteen hundred pounds, which was all that he and Fanny could call their own, if they united themselves without the approbation of Mr. Sharkem.

"Dear Rodney!" said Miss Sharkem, "do not press the point, I beseech you; it is exquisitely painful for me to refuse you any thing, but in this instance I
feel

feel it my duty, and I must do so. The time of our conversing draws rapidly to an end, for the rubber is almost over; listen to me therefore, I pray you, rather than employ the few remaining minutes we shall be together in requesting that to which I cannot accede. Hear me declare, in the most solemn manner, that ever since old Mr. St. Paul's will was made known to me, it has been my daily study how I could properly return the domain bequeathed to me into the St. Paul family: that *you* lived, Rodney, I dared not to indulge a hope—I had therefore privately determined *never to marry*; then I should retain a disposing power over the Napperton estate at my decease, and in favour of some of your brothers or sisters. I determined to exercise it. I meant, when

when I came of age, to reside at the Abbey, and endeavour to make Mrs. Frances Sharkem emulate the virtues of your deceased relatives, Mrs. Betty and Mrs. Mary St. Paul, and descend into the grave like them—a spinster. My spinster's humour, I must own, dear Rodney," continued she, blushing deeply, "was changed on meeting with you so providentially yesterday; but not my resolution to somehow or other restore the Abbey and its appendages to the family whose ancestors had so long possessed it."

" Dear, excellent, generous girl!" cried our hero; " I did not think my admiration of you could have been increased, but——"

" No more at present," interrupted Miss Sharkem—" the rubber is up."

" Sit

“ Sit still—sit still, my angel,” solicited Rodney; “ for though lady Langburn be pursing up her golden points, she is, good creature, cutting in again, forgetful of the poor cattle shivering in the cold; she is, I know, aware of the carriage having drawn up, for I heard a waiter announce it to her.”

Another half-hour, and all the eloquence of our true lover elicited nothing more from the determined Fanny than the repetition of a former promise never to unite herself with my lord Kilrennie: she added, however, an assurance, that in case Mr. Sharkem should still continue to press an union with her disagreeable admirer, and Rodney feel inclined to take her with her five hundred pounds portion, she would marry him the moment she had completed

pleted her twenty-first year—"For," observed she, "I shall then at least be mistress of my own person, and no law, human or divine, exists to prevent my disposing of it as I think proper.—The rubber is again ended."

"Yes," said Rodney, "and lady Langburn again employed in netting her golden fishes, and I suppose, from her countenance, would have no objection to angle for a few more of them; but her adversaries, I see, unluckily for me, are not disposed to indulge her ladyship, for they are moving off. Tomorrow, Fanny, shall I see you?"

"Yes," was the young lady's answer; "perhaps at the Pump Room, or more likely at ——'s library, about two."

Lady Langburn now sent a waiter to inform her coachman she was ready, and

and also to summon lord Kilrennie as her beau in waiting: he was stepping forward to seize the hand of Miss Sharkem, but Rodney had put her arm through his own.

“ Be so good, my lord, as conduct lady Langburn,” said Fanny—“ we will follow you;” and so they moved to the carriage.

CHAPTER VII.

Theseus—Earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which with'ring on a virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

Hermia.—So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, to whose unwish'd yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the following morning, much earlier than the world of fashion are accustomed to call upon their friends, or begin their tour of pops by proxy—*Anglice*, send round an empty chair to distribute their cards—did lady Langburn's footman thunder at the door of

Mrs. Sharkem's lodgings, and announce that her ladyship wished to be admitted.

Mrs. Sharkem's dressing-room looked upon the street, and from it she had observed the approaching sedan, and by the liveries of its attendants guessed who was about to honour her with a visit.

“ Blace me, Fay-ney! what in the wawrld cayn have indoosed leedy Lawngburn to come out so arely; she sarectly forgates we are at Bahth, where no living creetshure can pahsibly be seen, exsaipting at the Pahmp Room, before three. How incahnveenient it is! I wish she would stay quietly at hohme—why, I hav'n't got my mawrning drase on: dear me! how wahstly provoking!”

Miss

Miss Sharkem, not wishing to be a spectatress of her mamma's confusion at being thus caught before she had been "*dressed for undress*," or for some other reason best known to herself, retired.

Lady Langburn was admitted, and almost overwhelmed by Mrs. Sharkem's declarations and assurances of "how happy she was to see her leedyship—how kind it was of her leedyship to come so arely," &c. &c. &c.

The viscountess, as a matter of course, bowed most condescendingly, and increased quite to a smile the pretty everlasting simper into which she had primed her formal mouth, imagining it to convey a look of affability becoming her high rank: there was, however, notwithstanding her *sweet* smile, a some-

thing on her countenance which seemed to say she was not the bearer of pleasant news.

The purpose for which she *did* come was soon revealed, for her ladyship was scarcely seated before she began with her thousand apologies for what she was going to communicate, and her quite as many fears that “she should be thought unnecessarily officious; but really the respect she felt for Mr. Sharker—*the* wish she entertained that a young person of Miss Sharker’s fortune should marry properly, and with a just regard to the rank of her husband, made it quite impossible to suppress *certain particulars* which had just come to her knowledge.”

In short, not to tease my perusers with the right honourable lady’s prosing style,

style, and her auditress's drawling acknowledgments of obligation for "her leedyship's kindness," I shall simply state that the viscountess had that morning received information from her own woman, who had it from a friend, to whom mademoiselle Fripponier's head apprentice communicated it, that Miss Sharkem had continued shut up in the milliner's back-parlour, with a *very improper kind of young man*, for more than two hours after her late accident; that the said young man was some low acquaintance who had followed her from Yorkshire, and was reported to be a complete beggar; in short, if Mr. Sharkem did not make use of some precautionary measures, it was generally believed that an elopement would be the consequence.

To strengthen her representations, she added, “she was afraid, really afraid, these unpleasant rumours were not altogether unfounded, as, in spite of all her chaperoning care, and endeavour to introduce proper partners on the preceding night, Miss Sharkem had certainly danced with a person whom nobody knew, and who had the impertinence to sit down with the young lady who had thus inconsiderately honoured him, close to her ladyship’s whist-table.” She then concluded by saying—“Considering all the circumstances of the case, Mrs. Sharkem, though I would not by any means wish to dictate, I think lord Kilrennic cannot do less than call him out—though, on second thoughts, he perhaps is below the notice of a man of his

his lordship's rank and figure in society. The best thing in the world, my dear friend, between ourselves, will be to push your interesting daughter's marriage with her noble suitor as much as possible—an earl, you know, dear Sharkem, is not to be caught every day.—But I must be going—out of pure friendship for you I have come quite in dishabille—I have to dress for callers, so must hurry home: adieu, adieu!—Don't think me officious, dear Mrs. Sharkem; it's quite an affair of duty to such an excellent neighbour as yourself. *Adieu, ma chère madame!*"

Without waiting for an interview with Fanny, away flew the indignant mamma to Mr. Sharkem's chamber.

Such a scene ensued as beggars de-

scription. The old gentleman “never once thought, conceived, or imagined, that his dear, sweet, excellent Fanny would have given, imparted, or afflicted, such pain upon him.”

“And who, Mister Sharecum, cane the creetshure be who thahs presooms to look ahp to Fayney?”

Mr. Sharkem had a shrewd guess—Mrs. Sharkem not even a conjecture; for be it remembered that her husband was taken ill immediately after the recorded interview with Rodney, and had subsequently guarded the secret of the young sailor’s return from his family with the utmost caution, hoping by that means not to have so much difficulty in persuading his daughter to marry the earl; for he was well aware, from vari-

ous

ous circumstances, that she still nourished her early attachment to poor Rodney.

Miss Sharkem was called; the gazette extraordinary of the morning was laid before her.

To the charge of dancing with a person "whom none of the company at the rooms but herself knew," she pleaded guilty; but "as to his being an improper partner," she denied it most strenuously, and appealed to her father and mother, "if he could be considered in that light, when he was in reality no other than Mr. Rodney St. Paul."

"Rawdney!" interrogated Mrs. Sharkem; "what, the little faylow whom warthy Mr. St. Paul was so fawnd of?"

"Yes, mamma," cried Fanny, "the

very same—the dear, kind-hearted, excellent Rodney, of whom every one, as well as good old Mr. St. Paul, was fond. And to think of lady Langburn, or any body else, representing him as an improper partner for me, and that too at a time when he had just snatched me from the dangerous consequences of lord Kilrennie's injudicious driving!"

"And it was reelly the seme Rawdney?" asked Mrs. Sharkem: "how awd! Oh, he could not be so vary exsapetionable a partner, Mr. Sharecum?"

"Circumstances, Mrs. Sharkem," returned the solicitor, "alter, change, and give a new face and appearance to cases and statements. There *was* a time when Mister Rodney St. Paul would not by any manner of means have been thought,

thought, considered, or set down as an improper partner for Miss Sharkem: but now—hem!—now—now things are altered, changed, reversed—now Miss Sharkem is contracted, engaged, betrothed, to the right honourable the earl of Kilrennie, viscount—”

“ Papa, papa!” exclaimed Fanny, “ do not—do not say so—think so; I cannot, indeed I cannot be his!”

“ Daughter—Fanny—Miss Sharkem!” cried the old gentleman; “ do you wish and design to make me mad—to destroy—to murder me? You know and understand, perfectly and exactly well, that you *are* engaged to the noble lord aforesaid and described—you are aware and sensible of *my* promises to his lordship—you know, in short, that you *must be* his.”

“Never, never, papa!” cried Miss Sharkem; “for even if Rodney had not made his appearance, I could not have given my hand to lord Kilrennie: but now—now,” continued she, covered with crimson blushes, “it is *quite* impossible. You know, my dear sir, old Mr. St. Paul’s designs.”

“*Designs!*” repeated Sharkem, with an almost convulsive start, “*designs!* Fanny—Miss Sharkem—I don’t clearly and decidedly understand and comprehend you; but—but—it matters not—it signifies not—the earl’s you must and shall be, if ever you marry and enjoy the estate of Napperton.”

“At any rate, my dear papa,” resumed Fanny, “I never will be the wife of the earl of Kilrennie.”

“Obstinate, perverse girl—nay, ungrateful,

grateful, I may well proclaim you and declare you, since you make such a return for all I have *done* and undertaken for your aggrandizement and elevation," said solicitor Sharkem.

"Do not stigmatize me with such horrible epithets," cried Fanny; "I do not, my dear papa, indeed I do not deserve them. I cannot act otherwise than I do—I cannot accept lord Kilrennie's offer, whilst I feel myself engaged in a different quarter. To overlook poor Rodney's claim upon myself and the estate of his old cousin would, in my humble opinion, be a downright insult to the memory of the latter, for which I could never forgive myself.—You know, dear sir, how good Mr. St. Paul would have decided for me, if he had

had lived to see his beloved boy's return."

"Fanny—Miss Sharkem, no more," cried the solicitor; "not a syllable, word, or sentence, in this strain. *I do insist and command you to marry my lord.* What Mr. St. Paul, in his own proper person, would have done or enacted, is of no consequence, importance, or signification to me whatsoever. He thought right to appoint me the judge as to who was, or might be, a proper, fit, and convenient husband for you; and I shall not, I do hereby solemnly publish and declare, betray my sacred trust so far as to bestow you on a man neither possessed, nor likely to be possessed, of hereditary rank, nor any right, title, or interest, in or unto lands, tenements,

tenements, or hereditaments, whatsoever or wheresoever."

Fanny adhered to her declarations against lord Kilrennie, and in favour of our friend Rodney, and this with a firmness which her father unhesitatingly pronounced "obstinate pertinacity, base ingratitude, and unprecedented opposition to a power and authority lawfully ordained, constituted, and appointed." And so vehement was he in the utterance of these and similar expressions, together with threats of everlasting displeasure, that the exertion produced a most tremendous attack of spasm at the stomach.

For a considerable length of time he remained apparently lifeless, and when he again recovered the power of breathing freely, was so extremely weak, that

it

it was deemed expedient to convey him to his bed.

What a scene for the affectionate Fanny ! What a dangerous moment for our hero's tenderest interests !

A daughter like Fanny must yield to the entreaties of a parent who seemed struggling between life and death. Could he, I really think, have repeated them whilst his head lay gasping for breath upon his daughter's shoulder, she would have complied with the demand, had it been ever so unreasonable. Her firmness certainly melted ; she conceded, for when Mr. Sharkein became composed enough to converse—Now don't be alarmed, reader—the concession was not death to our Rodney's hopes, it only bound Miss Sharkein not to admit

mit of her young friend's personal attentions during their continuance at Bath.

Whilst these transactions were going on at Sharkem's lodgings in Laura-buildings, it will be naturally concluded that Rodney remained in a most painful state of expectation. He went to the Pump-room, and, although no partaker of Hygeia's salubrious stream, waited there till the water-drinkers ceased arriving.

Before the hour of two he had taken possession of a seat near the window in _____'s library, and thence was minutely inspecting every vehicle which passed. Many a dashing carriage stopped at the door—many an angelic figure tripped lightly into the room—but, alas! the

the object whom his eyes longed to rest upon appeared not.

At the expiration of more than a couple of hours, a young female advanced to the man who delivers out books, and Rodney fancied he heard her whisper his name.

“ I really don’t know the gentleman, ma’am,” was the answer she received, and with it she was moving off.

“ Who is the lady inquiring for?” asked our hero.

“ Mr. Rodney St. Paul,” returned the librarian.

“ That is my name,” exclaimed the young sailor.

The girl was stopped, and on interrogation said she “ came from Mr. Sharkey’s, and had a note for Mr. Rodney

St.

St. Paul;" it was in the handwriting of Fanny, and contained the following lines:—

" DEAR RODNEY,

" In former days you flattered me with such prompt attention to my requests, that I somehow think you will not prove deaf to my present solicitation, though so arbitrary and unreasonable as to require your immediate departure from Bath without an interview or explanation.

" When we shall return into the North I know not with any degree of certainty; but be assured, whenever it happens, I shall still remain

" *Your*

" FRANCES SHARKEM."

" P. S.—

“P. S.—Answer you must not attempt to send. Adieu!”

“Yes, Fanny, dear Fanny, you judge me rightly,” sighed Rodney, when he had perused the letter; “and I still continue so much devoted to you, that I will unhesitatingly comply with any of your commands, unless they require me to renounce and cease to love you. I confide in you implicitly; and, in proof, will quit this place by to-morrow’s mail.”

The short postscript of Miss Sharkein’s letter he did not, however, seem to notice, for he dispatched a servant with a note to be delivered to that young lady’s maid, announcing the time of his departure, and including a declaration, sincere,

sincere, though brilliant as youthful feeling could make it, that on her depended all his hopes of terrestrial happiness.

CHAPTER VIII.

His crimes, like evil spirits, hover over him—he wishes to shun danger, but how? He looks around, but the world he worshipped affords him not a single hope—he looks within; his terrified imagination drives him presently back—his breast heaves with a tumult of distress, and his dying hour closes upon him like the gloom of a stormy night.

GILPIN.

ON all accounts, the readiness with which Rodney complied with his dismissal from Bath was highly satisfactory to Mr. Sharkem and lord Kilrennie; to the latter it afforded an uninterrupted opportunity of pressing his tender suit—to the old gentleman, time (according to

to his sanguine hopes) for disposing of our hero in a way which, whilst it displayed great attention to the interests of the St. Paul family, would remove the young sailor immediately from England, and that, most likely, for many years.

It has before been mentioned, more than once, that Mr. Sharkem had considerable influence with persons high in office at the Admiralty : when could he exert it more properly than at a time when the former favourite of his “ dear, good, excellent Mr. St. Paul was in want of professional employment ?”

“ Heaven forbid that he should neglect, omit, or lose an opportunity of serving and benefiting, to the utmost bound, limit, and extent of his *little* power, any member, branch, or scion

of

of the family to which he felt such a weight of obligation!"

The strongest proof a man can give of gratitude is an eagerness to oblige and serve those from whom their benefits have descended: this proof was strikingly displayed in the promptitude with which Sharkem set about providing for the relation of the late venerable squire of Napperton Abbey; for the very day succeeding Rodney's quitting Bath he wrote a pressing entreaty to his correspondent at the Admiralty, to procure for his young friend some respectable employment on board the fleet which, he observed in the newspapers, was on the eve of sailing for a distant foreign station, where ships generally continued a long time.

Sharkem neither sued in vain, nor was

was kept long in suspense as to the result of his application, for, in a few posts, he received the formal appointment of Mr. Rodney St. Paul to an honourable and lucrative situation on board his majesty's ship the —, of seventy-four guns, with a postscript, which, by the way, was not the least acceptable part of the communication, announcing that the young gentleman must be at Spithead in the course of three weeks.

Enclosed in a letter, tedious as the verbose writer could make it, and including an assurance that Rodney might consider the present as merely a preliminary step towards superior honours, this important document was soon travelling in the mail to Yorkshire.

Mr. and Mrs. Sharkem were now in high spirits, and felt almost as much elevated as if able to talk to their family and friends of their daughter the countess, and their son-in-law the earl. The noble lord too seemed to feel himself completely on the 'vantage ground,' and strutted on it as consequentially as if the fair heiress and her domains were absolutely in his power and possession. The argument among them was, that Rodney's departure from England (which they considered quite certain) would facilitate their measures in the same sort of way that the withdrawing of a numerous opposing force would those of an army which considered themselves on the brink of annihilation.

How different was the impression made

made upon poor Fanny by the news of Rodney's appointment! it "knocked upon her heart" like the knell of every tender hope.—"With thy departure, oh Rodney, beloved Rodney!" sighed she, whilst she pressed a pillow moistened with tears of fond regret, "I shall bid adieu to every comfort which affluence can bestow! I will, however, sacredly hold myself as thy exclusive property. Never," added she, with as much fervency as if breathing a prayer, "by *any* act of mine shall the estate of Napper-ton descend from me to any but a St. Paul. I consider myself as nothing more than a trustee, holding it for the rightful heir."

How little did she dream, at this moment, of an act of hers, about to be committed, which would effectually

change the succession to the domains in question.

Sharkem's letter reached Danesdale, the residence of Rodney's mother, in regular time, but met with a reception altogether the reverse of what the *generous* patron expected from his *protégé* (as he wished our hero to be considered); for he rejected the offer at once, and decidedly. In fact, he neither liked the bestower, nor the sort of promotion announced; one he knew well enough to suspect of serving him with some sinister intent, and the other could not be enjoyed without re-entering a service, for which his extraordinary adventures had given him a complete distaste.

The answer which he returned to Sharkem was civil, but determinately negative; and never answer gave greater pain

pain and astonishment: the old gentleman read it two or three times over, and opened and closed the rejected appointment as often, before he seemed to consider the papers before him real.—“Who could have conceived, thought, or imagined,” said he to himself, “that this poor, unprovided-for, beggarly lad, would have refused and rejected such an’ advantageous offer, the profits and advantages wherefrom arising would be no less than four hundred pounds per annum, of good and lawful money of Great Britain? He must undoubtedly, unquestionably, suppose and opine, that he has a better and more desirable thing *in prospectum*, namely, a sort of contingent remainder in the inheritance of Napperton, through the right and interest of Frances Sharkem.”

To this he added a sort of mental vow, that his daughter should ennable herself, or never have the power of transmitting to her own posterity the estates bequeathed by Mr. St. Paul's will.

As a measure likely to accelerate this desired consummation of his *right honourable* wishes, he carefully concealed the receipt of our hero's provoking refusal, for he argued that Fanny, once convinced that Rodney had quitted the kingdom, and that without either endeavouring to see her, or making any communication by letter, might possibly soften in favour of lord Kilkenny, as other slighted ladies have done towards lovers who, in different circumstances, would have been considered intolerably disagreeable.

Poor

Poor Fanny was certainly very seriously distressed at the idea of Rodney's again embarking on the dangerous seas: but still she felt not as her father expected (perhaps intended) she should; she had faith in her beloved sailor's sincerity, and, *if it were possible* he should not prove what she held him to be, she still determined that she would not alienate Napperton from his family, by an union with any other man.

With these sentiments and determinations, it is scarcely necessary to say that lord Kilrennie did not discover any encouraging sunbeams on her countenance; and although Mr. Sharkem continued ten weeks in Bath, he took his daughter home quite as averse to a coronet as when she quitted Yorkshire. The old lawyer, however, affected to

regard a connexion with the earl as certain and unavoidable, for he was perpetually talking of something which had reference to it, and spent a great deal of money in purchases, which he took care to whisper to those surrounding him, were made preparatory to a certain wedding, on the eve of taking place. From these, and other circumstances, the life of Miss Sharkem became miserable in the extreme. Lord Kilrennie, encouraged by her father, assumed all the consequence of an accepted lover, and daily presumed to talk of his approaching hour of felicity.

Ornamental articles of pearl and jewellery arrived from town, suited to the embellishment of a fashionable bride; and shortly after, Mr. Sharkem presented to his daughter, for her signature,
deeds

deeds of settlement, by which, he triumphantly informed her, the noble carl had *generously* consented, that the whole of *her own* large fortune should (with the exception of his lordship's enjoying a life-interest in it) remain at her own disposal.

Fanny indignantly turned away from the writings presented, and repeated what she had said a thousand times before, that nothing could induce her to marry lord Kilrennie.

Sharkem as firmly asserted that her opposition would be vain, for a special licence had been obtained; and within a very few days she must either become lady Kilrennie, or brand her father with the character of a man who adhered not to his solemn word of honour.

Mrs. Sharkem likewise was not idle, for she eternally annoyed her unhappy child with a display of satins, silks, and laces, which she failed not to introduce as bridal finery; and talked as confidently about the presentation of her daughter, the countess of Kilrennie, at court, as if such an event were sure to take place at the very next drawing-room.

“What a wretched life must have been poor Fanny’s!” will, I doubt not, be here the general exclamation.

It was indeed, kind-hearted exclaim-er; for besides these parental communica-tions of her intended fate, she was surrounded by spies, who never left her a moment to herself; letter or mes-sage she could neither send nor receive unknown to the family—ride or walk,
beyond

beyond her father's grounds, she was not allowed to take, unaccompanied by the little lord; and, on that account, she entirely declined either.

So circumstanced, it was not likely she should discover, that instead of having embarked on board his majesty's ship the —, Rodney still continued at Danesdale, and almost daily hovered round her dwelling, in hopes of procuring an interview.

It was but seldom that even of the garden she could obtain exclusive possession, for her mother or her maid almost invariably accompanied her.

One fine spring evening, however, when Mrs. Sharkein was kept within doors by a severe cold, and abigail, like others of her sisterhood, was attracted from her fair charge to the servants'

hall, by the arrival of a neighbouring butler, whom she had the vanity of supposing she had seriously captivated, Fanny wandered forth alone, in the shrubbery adjoining her father's house, which led to a terrace, commanding a very extensive view of the country below, which stretched its highly cultivated, though, owing to its want of undulation, not very picturesque landscape, for many a mile, until the towers of that beautiful church, St. John of Beverley, were clearly distinguishable on the verge of the horizon.

Here she paced along with irregular steps, soliloquizing as she went, not always in very inaudible strains; the name of her dear absent lover was frequently breathed from her lips.

Suddenly she was interrupted by a deep

deep sigh. She started, looked round, and, much to her astonishment, beheld, at the foot of the wall, which raised the terrace on which she stood ten feet above the adjacent fields, Rodney St. Paul.

What lover would have regarded such an inconsiderable height as an inaccessible barrier between him and an adored object?

At any rate, a sailor could not, for he *climbs professionally*. In a few moments our hero was at the feet of his charming mistress. Soon he learnt, in full detail, her wrongs and grievances—soon found she had not received one out of many letters which he had entrusted to her maid since her return from Bath.—“And will you, my dearest girl,” said he, “thus give yourself up to such persecution—

persecution—such unjust tyranny? thus deprive me of the power of protecting you?"

"What can I do, Rodney?" sighed she. "The inheritance of Napperton ought to be, and must be yours; and should I pursue the measure you advise, it will be lost to you for ever. I must, alas! bear my present trials! Remember, time will bring them to an end."

"Fanny, dear Fanny!" cried the impassioned Rodney, "think not of Napperton—*you* are every thing my heart can wish for of happiness below! With you I defy all care—without you a crown would not have a single charm!"

"My father may relent," said Fanny, "and then——"

"Trust not, dearest," resumed the young sailor, "to such an uncertainty.

Fathers

Fathers are not generally formed of melting materials; they are too apt to forget the feelings of youth—too apt to think they are discharging their duty to their children, when procuring for them merely aggrandizing connexions."

By degrees Fanny's scruples gave way. Passion, which had "grown with her growth," prompted her to be Rodney's; persecution impelled her to become so, without waiting for the consent of her father.

Within a few days from this important and decisive interview, the youthful pair were flying on wings of love to *Grenada*, so often heard of by the readers of romance.

The elopement was not altogether unsanctioned by Mrs. St. Paul, for she promised an asylum to the travellers on their

their return from the North; and there they were consequently received with as much kindness and affection, as if the bride had brought with her the weighty recommendation of the often-mentioned estates of Napperton.

The first act of Fanny, after the conclusion of her matrimonial excursion, was to write in a very humble style to her father, acknowledging that the step she had taken was not quite consistent with her notions of filial duty, and would not have been taken, but from fear of being compelled to an act so abhorrent to her feelings, as that of bestowing her hand unaccompanied by her heart.

This letter, which was couched in the most respectful language, and concluded with a pathetic petition for forgiveness and

and restoration to favour, was not certainly returned; but it was answered in a way nearly as mortifying, for Mr. Sharkein declared that "he no longer regarded her as his daughter, and consequently must decline any communication, intercourse, or correspondence whatsoever or wheresoever, with her, or the family with whom she had intermarried."

As Rodney had decidedly renounced the sea, and the united property of himself and his wife was quite inadequate to furnish an independent support, it was deemed expedient that he should turn his mind to some new profession. Farming was recommended at the family council held on this important occasion; and that particularly, because

cause Matthew was at hand to superintend.

A small estate adjoining Danesdale was soon after taken, and to it the young couple were to retire at the following Lady-day. Stock and implements of husbandry were to be furnished by the elder brother of the St. Pauls, who promised to advance Rodney's portion of a younger child, amounting to about one thousand pounds, without waiting until he had attained his majority.

Fanny's legacy, under Mrs. Mary St. Paul's will, was payable on the day of her marriage, so that it would furnish cash with which to begin the world: when she came of age, she would likewise have a claim upon her father for

for arrears of rent arising out of the Abbey property, which had been received from the day of the old cousin's death until the time when her marriage without the consent of old Sharkem took place; so that, altogether, they would, shortly after the commencement of the agricultural operations, distant about ten months, have a capital which promised to our unambitious and inexperienced pair, if judiciously employed, every comfort which could result from "a plain rational scheme of life."

Delightedly anticipating the period when they should feel completely established in the world, and in possession of that peace and serenity inseparable from a well-regulated family, where every member is anxious to be reckoned among the number of those who "dwell together

together in unity," we will leave Rodney and his lovely Fanny for a few pages, and direct our attention to the movements of our *wordy* acquaintance, solicitor Sharkem: he felt his daughter's departure very severely, not merely from the loss of her unremitting assiduity, but also from the interruption it gave to his ambitious views: the way by which he strove to direct his attention from this irremediable stroke was, by turning it to the aggrandizement of his eldest son, whom he meant to succeed to Napperton Abbey, and for whom he projected a match with the almost-ideot daughter and heiress of a neighbouring squire, whose propensity to matrimony had been pretty strongly manifested by her repeated attempts to elope with her father's servants.

How

How often are such mercenary schemes interrupted by the striking visitations of Providence! In the present instance this was peculiarly observable: the intended bridegroom was most graciously received by the young lady—rapturously hailed as a son-in-law by her parents; an establishment was forming—servants were hired—carriages and horses were purchased; in three weeks the marriage was to be consummated.

Alas! ten days previous to the appointed ceremony, young Sharkem was attacked by a typhus fever, which terminated his life.

Before half the mourning for this elder hope had expired, fell another shaft of fate on the solicitor's house: the remaining son was killed by falling from

from a horse, which, contrary to the request of his father, and the advice of his grooms, he persevered in riding.

Such events might have been expected to lead to Fanny's immediate re-establishment under the roof of her parents, whose only child she had now become; but they did not, from the proceedings at Sharkem's, appear likely to produce such desirable consequences; the old gentleman had *pronounced* his daughter's banishment, and he wished his edicts, in this, as well as other circumstances, to be regarded like the unalterable laws of the Medes and Persians: and such influence had pride over him, that he preferred adopting an hundred-and-fiftieth cousin as his heir, to receiving back his own penitent offspring,

spring, which could not be done without breaking his *decree*, though the keeping of it were equally contrary to nature and justice.

Let it not for one moment be supposed that Mrs. Rodney St. Paul failed to offer her sincere condolences to her father and mother on the melancholy catastrophe of their two sons; she wrote to them most dutifully—most movingly. She even ventured to present herself at their house; but she was denied admittance, and her letter remained unnoticed.

What but hearts of stone could have resisted the pathetic appeal of an only surviving child—a child so good, so affectionate as Fanny? This appeal, too, made at a time when they were

aware she was many months advanced in that state in which Home beautifully observes,

“ Women wish to be,
Who love their lords.”

This unforgiving temper of those so near to her in blood, in spite of all the tender efforts of Rodney and his family, preyed upon the spirits of poor Fanny ; and so generally do body and mind sympathize, that her health gradually declined, until it became the united opinion of her medical attendants, that in giving birth to the expected infant she must yield her life.

As her trying hour approached, she felt an increased desire for reconciliation ; and, as a last effort to effect it, sat down and composed one of the
most

most moving addresses that could proceed from human eloquence: it stated her weak and hopeless condition—her unspeakable misery in dying unblessed by the parental lip—and finished with a solemn appeal in behalf of an unborn being, who never could have offended them.

The exertion of writing this epistle accelerated her labour, for she was taken extremely ill, and with every unpromising symptom, before her messenger had proceeded half way from Danesdale to Mr. Sharkem's.

This letter produced more than the writer expected or designed, for it not only rekindled the father's suffering affection for his child, but stimulated him, as to produce an almost instantaneous return of his spasmodic faint.

For several hours he continued in a state which disqualified him alike from speaking or writing a forgiving sentence to his unhappy daughter, though he struggled hard for utterance, and made many attempts to use his pen; at length he succeeded, with much trembling of hand, in committing to paper—

" DEAR FANNY,

" I forgive thee—bless thee most heartily, sincerely, and devoutly."

And with these words the courier was immediately dispatched to the dowager Mrs. St. Paul's.

Alas! he arrived there "in evil hour,"

• for

for he had scarcely entered the kitchen at Danesdale, before he heard a sudden shriek amongst the women up stairs, and one of the female attendants rushed instantly into the apartment, with the woful intelligence that Mrs. Rodney, after bringing forth a dead child, had breathed her last.

Sharkem's messenger waited not further particulars—offered not the note of which he had been the bearer, but hurried from the house of mourning, and flew, rather than rode, home with the sad news.

If Sharkem were so dreadfully moved by his child's last address, his feelings, when he heard *that* child was no more—that she had departed, unconscious of his blessing, will be easily conceived. He sunk under it, as a tree

suddenly blasted by the lightning; he revived, however, and to a full apprehension of his situation. The first question he plainly articulated was to his medical attendant, and it interrogated, how long he had a prospect of surviving?

The pupil of Esculapius would have spoken “ flattering words,” but old Sharkem would not admit them as true evidence.—“ Answer me, doctor,” said he, unhesitatingly, “ decidedly. Recovery I feel is impossible; the thunder-bolt has smitten me—I must be its victim.”

The doctor’s looks betrayed a similarity of opinion; but it was not before Mr. Sharkem had repeated his question, that it was answered—“ You may probably hold out twelve hours.”

A shudder

A shudder went through the frame of poor Sharkem; but he recomposed himself wonderfully, and merely exclaimed—"The time is short; but I must try and endeavour to use or employ it properly. Call Wilson."

Wilson came, and was closeted with his old employer for nearly an hour, during which a will was constructed, in as few words as possible, constituting Rodney St. Paul sole heir, not only of the Abbey, but all his other property; merely charging it with a legacy of five thousand pounds to Mrs. Sharkem, and the sum of one thousand to the child whom he had lately announced an intention of adopting.

This document had not long been executed before the senses of the testator became obviously and alarmingly

disordered. He raved of widows and orphans defrauded—of estates unjustly alienated from their legal heirs—of Mr. St. Paul giving him instructions for the disposal of his estates, which were never attended to—and a thousand other matters of similar import, which led to conjectures not very likely to prepossess the auditors with an idea that his had been a fair practice.

Long before the time mentioned by the doctor, he was seized with the agonies of dissolution, and breathed out his soul in groans the most dreadful that ever surely issued from mortal breast.

Reader, would you avoid such a latter end?

You *would*, I am sure—you *will*, I hope. If so, shun the crimes of the unfortunate

unfortunate Sharkein—"do justly—love mercy—walk humbly."

Then will you not only live the life, but "die the death of the righteous," and peace shall be with you, and rest upon you.

CHAPTER IX.

All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day discolour'd with domestic strife ;
No jealousy, but mutual truth believ'd—
Secure repose, and kindness undeeiv'd.

DRYDEN.

EARLY on the following day Wilson was at the door of Mrs. St. Paul's dwelling, inquiring for Mr. Rodney, and begging, if possible, to speak with him immediately. Much to his astonishment, the gentleman asked for came instantly forward, and with a countenance quite the reverse of what might be expected in a man recently bereaved

of

of a wife so lovely and so excellent as Fanny; in truth, that interesting young woman still lived — was even in a state which promised restoration to health.

After delivery she had indeed, from protracted and excessive suffering, fainted, and remained for a great length of time in a state so strongly resembling death, that one of the women about her had unthinkingly run down to inform the family “all was over.”

For many days — nay, I may say weeks, the decease of her father was carefully withheld from the delicate invalid; and not until her convalescence became decided, did even a hint upon the subject escape from the lips of the cautious and affectionate Rodney.

By degrees the melancholy detail was wholly unfolded.

At first the sad intelligence had quite an overwhelming influence, and perhaps would have proved fatal, had her father departed without leaving behind him a sentence of forgiveness for the only important step she ever took contrary to his wishes. Time, however, aided by religious resignation, ameliorated her affliction, and at the expiration of about six months from the departure of the old solicitor, Mr. and Mrs. Rodney St. Paul went to reside at Napperton Abbey, which, contrary to the general practice of those who inherit ancient mansion-houses, they preferred to the most splendid habitation which the first architect of the age could have erected.

There

There was indeed no part of the venerable fabric, its furniture or appendages, which they were not old-fashioned enough to reverence with an almost superstitious fondness; and nothing that repair could do was spared, in order to keep every thing up in the same order which had been observed in the time of our worthy "old cousin."

The day when Rodney and his partner took possession of their intended home was truly a jubilee to every inhabitant of their village. The great hall was thronged with the tenants and their wives; the servants' hall was thrown open to the inferior classes: Rodney was installed in his venerable cousin's Gothic chair, and Fanny in the seat whence Mrs. Mary St. Paul had so long done

done the honours of her brother's hospitable residence.

Sympson and the Hatchways, of course, were not forgotten; and theirs was not merely the feast of the day, for an annuity was immediately settled upon them, quite sufficient to render "all the remaining days of the years of their earthly pilgrimage" days of plenty and rejoicing.

As I would not by any means wish to leave you, dear reader, in the dark respecting the fate of any of those personages with whom you have formed an acquaintance in the preceding volumes, I think it right to observe that the widow Sharkem bore the loss of her dearly-beloved lord with all becoming fortitude and resignation, and was well enough

enough, at the time when fashion authorized the first change of mourning, to remove, *for the benefit of her health*, to the city of Bath—a place justly celebrated for assuaging griefs the most violent and ungovernable, especially (it is said) those of buxom well-jointed dowagers.

The first person who called to congratulate Mrs. Sharkem on her arrival, and no doubt to condole with her on her recent affliction, was the little earl of Kilrennie. Such early attention could not prove less than flattering—could not but elicit from the fair widow an assurance that she should “at all times feel happy and honored by his visits.”

My lord, notwithstanding his high rank,

rank, was not often accustomed to such civil and encouraging receptions. He looked at the speaker; he beheld a well-looking little woman, with the blooming cheeks and auburn locks of sixteen. He meditated privately on the advantages which would arise to him from a participation in her jointure, and the possession of her ready money, and came to an immediate resolution of informing her, that the capricious urchin, Cupid, had compelled him to transfer his affections from her daughter to herself.

Within a fortnight from his first call he declared his uncontrollable passion in due form.

The lovely matron had her “ delicate confusions,” her scruples about entering a second

a second time into the marriage-state; but his "*lardship* was *soo praysing—soo perswaisive*, there was no *passibee-lity* of *refoosing* him."

In short, his lordship's approaching happiness was almost immediately afterwards announced to the public in "the Morning Post" list of "expected marriages in high life;" and on the day when the charming dowager entered the thirteenth month of her widowhood, she had her fair forehead ornamented with a countess's coronet.

The bridal excursion of this noble and distinguished pair was, by invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Rodney St. Paul, to Napperton Abbey, and there they were received with every mark of respect and hospitality. What render-

ed

ed their entertainment festive in the highest degree, was their arrival on the very day appointed for the christening of Rodney's first-born son, who received the baptismal appellation of "Christopher," and over whom our hero piously ejaculated, as he held him in his arms, after the impressive ceremony of the church ended—"I thank thee, Almighty Ruler and Dispenser of every earthly blessing, for all which thou hast done for me and mine—for the providential care by which I escaped my perilous wanderings by sea and land—for the restoration of my family inheritance—for the society of my dear Fanny—and, though last not least, for the gift bestowed upon me in this lovely boy. May we have grace

to

to bring him up in the true faith and
fear of thee ! and may he emulate, in
every human excellence and amiable
perfection, his namesake and kinsman—
my old cousin !"

FINIS.

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